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THE

LIFE, LETTERS AND WRITINGS

OF

CHARLES LAMB.

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OF

CHARLES LAMB.

EDITED, WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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Correspondence with S. T. Coleridge.—

(*continued.*)

Letter XLVIII.] May 27th, 1803.

My dear Coleridge,—The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain this lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such a sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green Islands of the Bless'd, — (voyages in time of war are very precarious)— or at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your watch, (laid in cotton like an untimely fruit,) and with it Condillac, and all other books of yours which were left here. These will set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal waggon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry. I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till the middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to him, enforcing a speeding mission of your books for literary purposes?

He is too good a retainer to Literature to let her interests suffer through his default. And why, in the name of Beelzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and thence circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn Hill, up Snow ditto, on to Wood Street, &c.? The former mode seems a sad superstitious subdivision of labour. Well! the "Man of Ross" is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand, and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a *Salutation* poem, and has the mark of the beast "Tobacco" upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in the second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again, (as in the first edition,) like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the "Man of Ross" is too familiar to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it, and it now stands simply as "Reflections at an Inn about a known Character," and sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume, and I have even dared to restore

"If neath this roof thy *wine cheer'd* moments pass,"

for

"Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass."

"Cheer'd" is a sad general word, "*wine-cheer'd*" I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking trumpet to

sound to you 300 miles. But I am your *factotum*: and that, (save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you,) shall be next to a *fac-nihil*—at most a *fac-simile*. I have ordered "Imitation of Spenser" to be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be "Flicker and Flicker's Wife," "The Thimble," "Breathe *dear harmonist*," and *I believe*, "The Child that was fed with Manna." Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian Epistolary Miscellanies; but pray don't put "Christabel" therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of Tales, Choice Tales, "Ancient Mariners," &c. A word of your health will be richly acceptable. C. LAMB.

LETTER XLIX.] June 7th, 1809.

Dear Coleridge,—I congratulate you on the appearance of the *Friend*.[1] Your first Number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding Numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the Annual, am I not? The *Monthly Review* sneers at me, and asks "if *Comus* is not *good enough* for Mr. Lamb?" because I have said no good serious

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[1] The *Friend* ran to twenty-seven numbers, and was afterwards revised and included in the author's works.—H.

dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except *Samson Agonistes*. So because they do not know, or won't remember, that *Comus* was written long before, I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton! O Coleridge, do kill those reviews, or they will kill us; kill all we like. Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself, but I have got other at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on the third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following Mary was taken ill with the fatigue of moving; and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life!—out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together. I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by-and-by. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that 'tis like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised: I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if

Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of Juvenile Poetry, done by Mary and me within the last six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan; but I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health and liberty and strength; and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the Devil.

Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetch'd away my books which you had at the *Courier* Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing the *White Devil*, Green's *Tu Quoque*, and the *Honest Whore*, perhaps the most valuable volume of them all—*that* I could not find. Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word, for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the *Arcadia*, and *Daniel*, enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish *Daniel*, or to say I relish him, for

after all, I believe I did relish him. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes are excellent. Perhaps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the *Quarterly*, by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge its being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and, pray, do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure any thing of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read *Cælebs?* It has reached eight editions in so many weeks, yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the draw-back of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavoured, it would have been something. I borrowed this *Cælebs in Search of a Wife*, of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning:—

> "If ever I marry a wife
> "I'll marry a landlord's daughter,
> "For then I may sit in the bar,
> "And drink cold brandy and water."

I don't expect you can find time from your *Friend* to write to me much; but write something, for there has been a long silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books:

but my head 'aches, and I hardly know what I write, but I could not let the *Friend* pass without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticise till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you? —by what conveyance?—by Longman, Short-man, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to Wordsworth. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs. W. and to Dorothy separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all.

C. L.

LETTER L.] Monday, Oct. 30th, 1809.

Dear Coleridge,—I have but this moment received your letter, dated the 9th instant, having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days, and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a-day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room. I have made several acquisitions since you saw them,—and found Nos. 8, 9, 10 of the *Friend*. The account of Luther in the Warteburg is as fine as any thing I ever read.[1]

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[1] The Warteburg is a Castle, standing on a lofty rock, about two miles from the city of Eisenach, in which Luther was confined, under the friendly arrest of the Elector of Saxony, after Charles V. had pronounced against him the Ban in the Imperial Diet; where he composed some of his greatest works, and translated the New Testament; and where he is recorded as engaged in the personal conflict with the Prince

God forbid that a man who has such things to say should be silenced for want of £100. This Custom-and-Duty Age would have made the Preacher on the Mount take out a licence, and St. Paul's Epistles would not have been missible without a stamp. O that you may find means to go on! But alas! where is Sir G. Beaumont?—Sotheby? What is become

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of Darkness, of which the vestiges are still shown in a black stain on the wall, from the inkstand hurled at the Enemy. In the Essay referred to, Coleridge accounts for the story, depicting the state of the great prisoner's mind in most vivid colours, and then presenting the following picture, which so nobly justifies Lamb's eulogy, that I venture to gratify myself by inserting it here:—

"Methinks I see him sitting, the heroic student, in his chamber in the Warteburg, with his midnight lamp before him, seen by the late traveller in the distant plain of *Bischofsroda*, as a star on the mountain! Below it lies the Hebrew Bible open, on which he gazes; his brow pressing on his palm, brooding over some obscure text, which he desires to make plain to the simple boor and to the humble artizan, and to transfer its whole force into their own natural and living tongue. And he himself does not understand it! Thick darkness lies on the original text; he counts the letters, he calls up the roots of each separate word, and questions them as the familiar Spirits of an Oracle. In vain; thick darkness continues to cover it; not a ray of meaning dawns through it. With sullen and angry hope he reaches for the Vulgate, his old and sworn enemy, the treacherous confederate of the Roman Antichrist, which he so gladly, when he can, rebukes for idolatrous falsehood, that had dared place

'Within the sanctuary itself their shrines,
'Abominations—'

Now (O thought of humiliation!) he must entreat its aid. See! there has the sly spirit of apostacy worked in a phrase, which favours the doctrine of purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the efficacy of prayers for the dead; and what is worst of all, the interpretation is plausible. The original Hebrew might be forced into this meaning; and no other meaning seems to lie *in* it, none to hover *above* it in the heights of allegory, none to lurk *beneath* it even in the depths of Cabala! This is the work of the Tempter; it is a cloud of darkness conjured up between the truth of the sacred letters and the eyes of his understanding, by the malice of the Evil One, and for a trial of his faith! Must he then at length confess, must he subscribe the name of LUTHER to an exposition which consecrates a weapon for the hand of the idolatrous Hierarchy? Never! Never!

of the rich Auditors in Albemarle Street? Your letter has saddened me.

I am so tired with my journey, being up all night, that I have neither things nor words in my power. I believe I expressed my admiration of the pamphlet. Its power over me was like that which Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries,

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"There still remains one auxiliary in reserve, the translation of the Seventy. The Alexandrine Greeks, anterior to the Church itself, could intend no support to its corruptions. The Septuagint will have profaned the Author of Truth with no incense for the nostrils of the universal Bishop to snuff up. And here again his hopes are baffled! Exactly at this perplexed passage had the Greek translator given his understanding a holiday, and made his pen supply its place. O honoured Luther! as easily mightest thou convert the whole City of Rome, with the Pope and the conclave of Cardinals inclusively, as strike a spark of light from the words, and *nothing but words*, of the Alexandrine version. Disappointed, despondent, enraged, ceasing to *think*, yet continuing his brain on the stretch in solicitation of a thought; and gradually giving himself up to angry fancies, to recollections of past persecutions, to uneasy fears, and inward defiances, and floating images of the Evil Being, their supposed personal author, he sinks, without perceiving it, into a trance of slumber; during which his brain retains its waking energies, excepting that what would have been mere *thoughts* before, now (the action and counterweight of his senses and of their impressions being withdrawn) shape and condense themselves into *things*, into realities! Repeatedly half-wakening, and his eye-lids as often reclosing, the objects which really surround him form the place and scenery of his dream. All at once he sees the arch-fiend coming forth on the wall of the room, from the very spot, perhaps, on which his eyes had been fixed vacantly, during the perplexed moments of his former meditation. The inkstand which he had at the same time been using, becomes associated with it; and in that struggle of rage, which in these distempered dreams almost constantly precedes the helpless terror by the pain of which we are finally awakened, he *imagines* that he hurls it at the intruder; or not improbably in the first instant of awakening, while yet both his imagination and his eyes are possessed by the dream, he *actually* hurls it. Some weeks after perhaps, during which interval he had often mused on the incident, undetermined whether to deem it a visitation of Satan to him in the body or out of the body, he discovers for the first time the dark spot on his wall, and receives it as a sign and pledge vouchsafed to him of the event having actually taken place."—T.

who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose! Do you hear if it is read at all? I am out of the world of readers. I hate all that do read, for they read nothing but reviews and new books. I gather myself up unto the old things.

I have put up shelves. You never saw a book-case in more true harmony with the contents than what I've nailed up in a room, which, though new, has more aptitudes for growing old than you shall often see—as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life, who becomes an old friend in a short time. My rooms are luxurious; one is for prints and one for books; a Summer and a Winter parlour. When shall I ever see you in them?

C. L.

LETTER LI.] 13th Aug., 1814.

Dear Resuscitate,—There comes to you by the vehicle from Lad Lane this day a volume of German; what it is I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr. Southey's towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the Doctor, as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but being disclosed, how far unlike! It was the *Well-bred Scholar*,—a book with which it seems the Doctor laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avocations. Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from the *Life of Savage*, make up a prettyish system of morality and the belles-

lettres, which Mr. Mylius, a schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above mentioned. The Doctor had no sooner discovered his error, than he dispatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note, seemeth to deny any knowledge of the *Well-bred Scholar;* false modesty surely, and a blush misplaced: for what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving! But so, when a child, I remember blushing, being caught on my knees to my Maker, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action: *now* I rather love such things to be seen. Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Norfolk Circuit,—a short term, but to him, as to many young lawyers, a long vacation, sufficiently dreary.[1] I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself, than which I think I never read any thing more moving, more pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books. Perhaps, after all, that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time: his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last—I know

[1] A mistake of Lamb's, at which the excellent person referred to may smile, now that he has retired from his profession, and has no business but the offices of kindness.—T.

they will—pure golden pippin. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of the persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away; if it be, he is a sloe, and no true-hearted Crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German conjuror which you speak of, *Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis*, I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs. Morgan and Miss Brent, in London Street,—(by that token we had raw rabbits for supper, and Miss B. prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water, which is not my habit,)—I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in their parlour, and I think it must be among their packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frank-hearted circle, Morgan, and his cos-lettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.

* * * * * *

I am going to eat turbot, turtle, venison, marrow pudding,—cold punch, claret, Madeira,—at our annual feast, at half-past four this day. They keep bothering me, (I'm at office,) and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonican should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some book proprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand 'em best.

C. LAMB.

LETTER LII.] 26th August, 1814.

Let the hungry soul rejoice, there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of "Remorse" on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the *Rokebys* and the *Laras*, and where shall they be found?—fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper; whereas thy *Wallenstein* and thy *Remorse* are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian; there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

Thy caterer, Price, was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs. Jameson and Aders, No. 7, Laurence Pountney Lane, London, according to the information which

Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Allemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany: an impudent clever woman. But if *Faust* be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for *Proclus*. It is a kind of book which, when we meet with it, we shut up faster than we opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or *Plotinus*, or Saint Augustine's *City of God*. So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, "well used," had been the "Pledge of Immortality." Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such a "Hare" as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication, and may his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press. So I think I have answered all thy questions except about Morgan's cos-lettuce. The first personal peculiarity I ever observed of him (all worthy souls are subject to 'em) was a particular kind of rabbit-like delight in munching salads with oil without vinegar after dinner — a steady contemplative browsing on

them—didst never take note of it? Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last. Trollope has got his living, worth £1000 a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at! Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

CHARLES LAMB.

LETTER LIII.] Dec. 24th, 1818.

My dear Coleridge,—I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy, which has utterly failed. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little, but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819? Shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer? How the years crumble from under

us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours,

C. LAMB.

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas Day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's Day, Holy Innocents, &c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadenhall.

LETTER LIV.] January 10, 1820.

Dear Coleridge,—A letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, clerk's blood. Hang 'em! my brain, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, time is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad tattler; but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since. He almost alienated you also from me, or me from you, I don't know which; but that breach is closed. The "dreary sea" is filled up. He has lately been at work "telling again," as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and

has caused a coolness betwixt me and (not a friend exactly, but) an intimate acquaintance. I suspect also he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday; and, better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's, or any other magazine, passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, "you know best." I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations; so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet[1] I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet "about Brownie" into *Blackwood!* I did not. So no more, till we meet.

Ever yours, C. L.

LETTER LV.] March 9th, 1822.

Dear Coleridge,—It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well: they are interesting creatures at a certain age. What a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling and brain sauce. Did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently

[1] A sonnet in *Blackwood's Magazine*, dated "Manchester," and signed C. L.—T.

dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly with no Œdipean avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that *I* sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part Owen could play in the business. I never knew him give any thing away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things which I could never think of sending away. Teal, widgeon, snipes, barn-door fowls, ducks, geese — your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere. Where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs of remorse I ever felt was when a child—when my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts; a look-beggar, not a verbal petitionist; and inthe coxcombry of taugh t charity I gave away the

cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me; the sum it was to her; the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old imposter—should take in eating her cake; the ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like; and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and it proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to the dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

Yours (short of pig) to command in every thing.

C. L.

LETTER LVI.] 1824.

Dear Coleridge,—Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio, that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid, Becky, brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was "Luster's Tables," which, for some time, I could not make out. "What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?" "No, it wasn't any tables, but it

was a book that he called Luster's Tables." I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, Coleridge, you should not have taken away, for it is not mine; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress;* but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learneder clerks than I; so I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c.?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them, I charge no warehouse room for my friends' commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy. There's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine, but I cherish it as my own. I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book. I may lend you my own books, because it

is at my own hazard; but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley; or he can bring that, and you the *Polemical Discourses*, and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four—men and books I mean. My third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend,

C. LAMB

LETTER LVII.] March 22, 1826.

Dear Coleridge,—We will with great pleasure be with you on Thursday in the next week early. May we venture to bring Emma with us? Your finding out my style in your nephew's pleasant book is surprising to me. I want eyes to descry it. You are a little too hard upon his morality, though I confess he has more of Sterne about him than of Sternhold. But he saddens into excellent sense before the conclusion. Your query shall be submitted to Miss Kelly, though it is obvious that the pantomime, when done, will be more easy to decide upon than in proposal. I say, do it by all means. I have Decker's play by me, if you can filch anything out of it. Miss Gray, with her kitten eyes, is an actress, though she shows it not at all; and pupil to the former, whose gestures she mimics in comedy to the disparagement

of her own natural manner, which is agreeable. It is funny to see her bridling up her neck, which is native to F. K.; but there is no setting the manners of others upon one's shoulders any more than their head. I am glad you esteem Manning, though you see but his husk or shrine. He discloses not, save to select worshippers, and will leave the world without any one hardly but me knowing how stupendous a creature he is. I am perfecting myself in the "Ode to Eton College" against Thursday, that I may not appear unclassic. I have just discovered that it is much better than the "Elegy."

In haste, C. L.

P.S.—I do not know what to say to your *latest* theory about Nero being the Messiah, though by all accounts he was a 'nointed one.

LETTER LVIII.] June 1st, 1826.

Dear Coleridge,—If I know myself, nobody more detests the display of personal vanity, which is implied in the act of sitting for one's picture, than myself. But the fact is, that the likeness which accompanies this letter was stolen from my person at one of my unguarded moments by some too partial artist, and my friends are pleased to think that he has not much flattered me. Whatever its merits may be, you, who have so great an interest in the original, will have a satisfaction in tracing the features of one that has so long esteemed you. There are times when in a friend's absence these graphic representations of him almost seem to bring back the man him-

self. The painter, whoever he was, seems to have taken me in one of those disengaged moments, if I may so term them, when the native character is so much more honestly displayed than can be possible in the restraints of an enforced sitting attitude. Perhaps it rather describes me as a thinking man, than a man in the act of thought. Whatever its pretensions, I know it will be dear to you, towards whom I should wish my thoughts to flow in a sort of an undress rather than in the more studied graces of diction.

I am, dear Coleridge, yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

LETTER LIX.] 1829.

Dear Coleridge, — Your sonnet is capital. The paper is ingenious,[1] only that it split into four parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper, *manufactured of rags*, for better preservation. I never knew before how the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written. 'Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up, and listen to the kettle, and then purr, which is *their* poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With remembrances to your good host and hostess,

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

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[1] Some gauzy tissue-paper on which the sonnet was copied.—T.

LETTER LX.] 1829.

My dear Coleridge,—With pain and grief, I must entreat you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had a severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea of an engagement hanging over for a day or two, forbids my rest, and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents my coming. I expect Field and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gilmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you, again, that I am not fit to go out yet.

Yours (though shattered),

C. LAMB.

Tuesday.

LETTER LXI.] April 14th, 1832.

My dear Coleridge,—Not an unkind thought has passed in my brain about you; but I have been wofully neglectful of you; so that I do not deserve to announce to you, that if I do not hear from you before then, I will set out on Wednesday morning to take you by the hand. I would do it this moment, but an unexpected visit might flurry you. I shall take silence for acquiescence, and come. I am glad you could write so long a letter. Old loves to, and hope of kind looks from, the Gilmans when I come.

Yours, *semper idem*, C. L.

If you ever thought an offence, much more wrote it, against me, it must have been in the times of Noah, and the great waters swept it away. Mary's most kind love, and maybe a wrong prophet of your bodings!—here she is crying for mere love over your letter. I wring out less, but not sincerer showers.

My direction is simply, Enfield.

LETTER LXI.*] 1821.

Dear C.,—I will not fail you on Friday at six, and Mary, perhaps, earlier. I very much wish to meet "Master Mathew,"[1] and am much obliged to the G.'s for the opportunity. Our kind respects to them always.

ELIA.

Extract from a MS. note of S. T. C. in my Beaumont and Fletcher, dated April 17th, 1807.

"*Midnight.*

God bless you, dear Charles Lamb, I am dying: I feel I have not many weeks left.

Mr. Gilman's,
Highgate."

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[1] Referring to Charles Mathews the elder, whom he was invited to meet.—F.

II.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH ROBERT SOUTHEY.

LETTER LXII.] July 28th, 1798.

Dear Southey,—I am ashamed that I have not thanked you before this for the *Joan of Arc*, but I did not know your address, and it did not occur to me to write through Cottle. The poem delighted me, and the notes amused me; but methinks she of Neufchatel, in the print, holds her sword too "like a dancer." I sent your *notice* to Phillips, particularly requesting an immediate insertion, but I suppose it came too late. I am sometimes curious to know what progress you make in that same "Calendar:" whether you insert the nine worthies and Whittington? what you do or how you can manage when two Saints meet and quarrel for precedency? Martlemas, and Candlemas, and Christmas, are glorious themes for a writer like you, antiquity-bitten, smit with the love of boars' heads and rosemary; but how you can ennoble the 1st of April I know not. By the way, I had a thing to say, but a certain false modesty has hitherto prevented me: perhaps I can best communicate my wish by a hint. My birthday is on the 10th of February, New Style; but if it interferes with any remarkable event, why rather than my country should lose her fame, I care not if I put my nativity back eleven days. Fine family patronage for your "Ca-

lendar," if that old lady of prolific memory were living, who lies (or lyes) in some church in London, (saints forgive me, but I have forgot *what* church,) attesting that enormous legend of as many children as days in the year. I marvel her impudence did not grasp at a leap-year. Three hundred and sixty-five dedications, and all in a family! You might spit in spirit, on the oneness of Mæcenas's patronage!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia: "Poor Lamb," (these were his last words,) "if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me." In ordinary cases I thanked him. I have an "Encyclopædia" at hand; but on such an occasion as going over to a German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ.

I.

"Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?"

II.

"Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would?*"

III.

"Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term 'virtutes minus splendidæ et hominis et terræ nimis participes?'."

IV.

"Whether the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?"

V.

"Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer?*"

VI.

"Whether pure intelligence can *love*, or whether they can love any thing besides pure intellect?"

VII.

"Whether the beatific vision be any thing more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments, and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking glasses?"

VIII.

"Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul' may not come *to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?*"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge hath not deigned an answer. Was it impertinent of me to avail myself of that offered source of knowledge?

Wishing *Madoc* may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth, or purification, of the Maid of Neufchatel,—I remain yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

I hope Edith is better; my kindest remembrances to her. You have a good deal of trifling to forgive in this letter.

"Love and remembrances to Cottle."

LETTER LXIII.] Oct. 18th, 1798.

Dear Southey,—I have at last been so fortunate as to pick up Wither's Emblems for you, that "old book and quaint," as the brief author of Rosamund Gray hath it; it is in a most detestable state of preservation, and the cuts are of a fainter impression than I have seen. Some child, the curse of antiquaries and bane of bibliopical rarities, hath been dabbling in some of them with its paint and dirty fingers; and, in particular, hath a little sullied the author's own portraiture, which I think valuable, as the poem that accompanies it is no common one; this last excepted, the Emblems are far inferior to old Quarles. I once told you otherwise, but I had not then read old Quarles with attention. I have picked up, too, another copy of Quarles for ninepence!!! O tempora! O lectores! so that if you have lost or parted with your own copy, say so, and I can furnish you, for you prize these things more than I do. You will be amused, I think, with honest Wither's "Supersedeas to all them whose custom it is, without any deserving, to importune authors to give unto them their books." I am sorry 'tis imperfect, as the lottery board annexed to it also is. Methinks you might modernise and elegantise this Supersedeas, and place it in front of your Joan of Arc, as a gentle hint to Messrs. Parke, &c. One of the happiest emblems, and comicalest cuts, is the owl and little chirpers, page 63.

Wishing you all amusement, which your true emblem-fancier can scarce fail to find in even bad emblems, I remain your caterer to command,

C. LAMB.

Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well. How does your Calendar prosper?

LETTER LXIV.]

Dear Southey,—I thank you heartily for the Eclogue; it pleases me mightily, being so full of picture work and circumstances. I find no fault in it, unless perhaps that Joanna's ruin is a catastrophe too trite; and this is not the first or second time you have clothed your indignation, in verse, in a tale of ruined innocence. The old lady, spinning in the sun, I hope would not disdain to claim some kindred with old Margaret.[1] I could almost wish you to vary some circumstances in the conclusion. A gentleman seducer has so often been described in prose and verse. What if you had accomplished Joanna's ruin by the clumsy arts and rustic gifts of some country-fellow? I am thinking, I believe, of the song—

> "An old woman clothed in gray,
> Whose daughter was charming and young,
> And she was deluded away
> By Roger's false flattering tongue."

A Roger-Lothario would be a novel character; I think you might paint him very well. You may think this

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[1] The "old Margaret," in Lamb's story of *Rosamund Gray*.—H.

a very silly suggestion, and so indeed it is; but, in good truth, nothing else but the first words of that foolish ballad put me upon scribbling my *Rosamund*. But I thank you heartily for the poem. Not having any thing of my own to send you in return, (though, to tell truth, I am at work upon something, which, if I were to cut away and garble, perhaps I might send you an extract or two that might not displease you; but I will not do that; and whether it will come to any thing I know not, for I am as slow as a Fleming painter, when I compose any thing,) I will crave leave to put down a few lines of old Christopher Marlow's; I take them from his tragedy, *Jew of Malta*. The Jew is a famous character, quite out of nature; but, when we consider the terrible idea our simple ancestors had of a Jew, not more to be discommended for a certain discolouring (I think Addison calls it) than the witches and fairies of Marlow's mighty successor. The scene is betwixt *Barabbas*, the Jew, and *Ithamore*, a Turkish captive, exposed to sale for a slave.

BARABBAS.

(A precious rascal.)

"As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls
Sometimes I go about, and poison wells;
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns,
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'm go pinion'd along by my door.
Being young, I studied physic, and began
To practise first upon the Italian:
There I enrich'd the priests with burials,
And always kept the sexton's arms in use
With digging graves, and ringing dead men's knells;

And after that was I an engineer,
And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
Under pretence of serving Charles the Fifth,
Slew friends and enemy with my stratagems.
Then after that was I an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I fill'd the jails with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad,
And now and then one hang himself for grief,
Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll,
How I with interest had tormented him."

(Now hear Ithamore, the other gentle nature.)

ITHAMORE.

(A comical dog.)

"Faith, master, and I have spent my time
In setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley slaves.
One time I was an hostler at an inn,
And in the night time secretly would I steal
To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.
Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
I strew'd powder on the marble stones,
And therewithal their knees would rankle so,
That I have laugh'd a good to see the cripples
Go limping home to Christendom on stilts."

BARABBAS.

Why, this is something.

There is a mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in these lines, brimful of genius and antique invention, that at first reminded me of your old description of cruelty in hell, which was in the true Hogarthian style. I need not tell *you* that Marlow was author of that pretty madrigal, "Come live with me and be my Love," and of the tragedy of Edward II., in which are certain *lines* unequalled in our English tongue.

Honest Walton mentions the said madrigal under the denomination of "certain smooth verses made long since by Kit Marlow."

I am glad you have put me on the scent after old Quarles. If I do not put up those eclogues, and that shortly, say I am no true-nosed hound. I have had a letter from Lloyd; the young metaphysician of Caius is well, and is busy recanting the new heresy, metaphysics, for the old dogma, Greek. My sister, I thank you, is quite well. She had a slight attack the other day, which frightened me a good deal, but it went off unaccountably. Love and respects to Edith.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

LETTER LXV.] Nov. 3, 1798.

I have read your Eclogue repeatedly, and cannot call it bald, or without interest; the cast of it and the design are completely original, and may set people upon thinking. It is as poetical as the subject requires, which asks no poetry; but it is defective in pathos. The woman's own story is the tamest part of it; I should like you to remould that: it too much resembles the young maid's history; both had been in service. Even the omission would not injure the poem: after the words "growing wants," you might, not unconnectedly, introduce "look at that little chub" down to "welcome one." And, decidedly, I would have you end it somehow thus,—

> "Give them at least this evening a good meal.
> [*Gives her money.*
> Now, fare thee well; hereafter you have taught me
> To give sad meaning to the village bells." &c.

which would leave a stronger impression (as well as

more pleasingly recall the beginning of the Eclogue) than the present commonplace reference to a better world, which the woman "must have heard at church." I should like you too a good deal to enlarge the most striking part, as it might have been, of the poem—"Is it idleness?" &c.: that affords a good field for dwelling on sickness, and inabilities, and old age. And you might also a good deal enrich the piece with a picture of a country wedding. The woman might very well, in a transient fit of oblivion, dwell upon the ceremony and circumstances of her own nuptials six years ago, the snugness of the bridegroom, the feastings, the cheap merriment, the welcomings, and the secret envyings of the maidens; then dropping all this, recur to her present lot. I do not know that I can suggest any thing else, or that I have suggested any thing new or material. I do not much prefer this Eclogue to the last. Both are inferior to the former.

> "And when he came to shake me by the hand,
> And spake as kindly to me as he used,
> I hardly knew his voice—"

is the only passage that affected me. When servants speak their language ought to be plain, and not much raised above the common else I should find fault with the bathos of this passage,—

> "And when I heard the bell strike out,
> I thought (what?) that I had never heard it toll
> So dismally before."

I like the destruction of the martens' old nests hugely, having just such a circumstance in my memory. I shall be very glad to see your remaining Ecologue, if not too much trouble, as you give me

reason to expect it will be the second best. I shall be very glad to see some more poetry; though, I fear, your trouble in transcribing will be greater than the service my remarks may do them.

Yours affectionately, C. LAMB.

I cut my letter short because I am called off to business.

LETTER LXVI.] Nov. 8th, 1798.

I perfectly accord with your opinion of old Wither; Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart. Quarles thinks of his audience when he lectures; Wither soliloquizes in company from a full heart. What wretched stuff are the "Divine Fancies" of Quarles! Religion appears to him no longer valuable than it furnishes matter for quibbles and riddles; he turns God's grace into wantonness. Wither is like an old friend, whose warm-heartedness and estimable qualities make us wish he possessed more genius, but at the same time make us willing to dispense with that want. I always love Wither, and sometimes admire Quarles. Still that portrait poem is a fine one; and the extract from "Shepherds' Hunting" places him in a starry height far above Quarles. If you wrote that review in the *Critical Review*, I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the *Ancient Marinere*. So far from calling it as you do, with some wit, but more severity, a "Dutch Attempt," &c., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the

miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

> "A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware."

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. Lloyd does not like it; his head is too metaphysical, and your taste too correct; at least I must allege something against you both, to excuse my own dotage—

> "So lonely 'twas, that God himself
> Scarce seem'd there to be!"—&c., &c.

But you allow some elaborate beauties: you should have extracted 'em. The *Ancient Marinere* plays more tricks with the mind than that last poem, which is yet one of the finest written. But I am getting too dogmatical; and before I degenerate into abuse, I will conclude with assuring you that I am

Sincerely yours,

C. LAMB.

'I am going to meet Lloyd at Ware on Saturday, to return on Sunday.' Have you any commands or commendations to the metaphysician? I shall be very happy if you will dine or spend any time with me in your way through the great ugly city; but I know you have other ties upon you in these parts.

Love and respects to Edith, and friendly remembrances to Cottle.

LETTER LXVII.] Nov. 28th, 1798.[1]

I can have no objection to your printing "Mystery

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[1] In this year Mr. Cottle proposed to publish an annual volume of

of God" with my name, and all due acknowledgments for the honour and favour of the communication; indeed, 'tis a poem that can dishonour no name Now, that is in the true strain of modern modesto-vanitas. . . . But for the sonnet, I heartily wish it, as I thought it was, dead and forgotten. If the exact circumstances under which I wrote could be known or told, it would be an interesting sonnet; but to an indifferent and stranger reader it must appear a very bald thing, certainly inadmissible in a compilation. I wish you could affix a different name to the volume. There is a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings, entitled *Pratt's Gleanings*, which hath damned and impropriated the title for ever. Pray think of some other. The gentleman is better known (better had he remained unknown) by an Ode to Benevolence, written and spoken for and at the annual dinner of the Humane Society, who walk in procession once a year, with all the objects of their charity before them, to return God thanks for giving them such benevolent hearts.

I like "Bishop Bruno," but not so abundantly as your "Witch Ballad," which is an exquisite thing of its kind.

I showed my "Witch" and "Dying Lover" to

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fugitive poetry by various hands, under the title of the *Annual Anthology*; to which Coleridge and Southey were principal contributors, the first volume of which was published in the following year. To this little work Lamb contributed a short religious effusion in blank verse, entitled "Living without God in the World." The following letter refers to this poem by its first words, "Mystery of God," and recurs to the rejected sonnet to his sister; and alludes to an intention, afterwards changed, of entitling the proposed collection "Gleanings."—T.

Dyer last night; but George could not comprehend how *that* could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessor had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the Ode, the Epigram, and the Epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine, by correcting a proof sheet of his own Lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance of six or eight lines apart, and calls that "observing the laws of verse!" George tells you, before he recites, that you must listen with great attention, or you'll miss the rhymes. I did so, and found them pretty exact. George, speaking of the dead Ossian, exclaimeth, "Dark are the poet's eyes!" I humbly represented to him that his own eyes were dark, and many a living bard's besides, and recommended "Closed are the poet's eyes." But that would not do. I found there was an antithesis between the darkness of his eyes and the splendour of his genius; and I acquiesced.

Your recipe for a Turk's poison is invaluable, and truly Marlowish. . . . Lloyd objects to "shutting up the womb of his purse" in my curse; (which, for a Christian witch in a Christian country, is not too mild, I hope.) Do you object? I think there is a strangeness in the idea, as well as "shaking the poor like snakes from his door," which suits the speaker. Witches illustrate, as fine ladies do, from their own familiar objects, and snakes and the shutting up of wombs are in their way. I don't know that this last charge has been before brought against 'em, nor either the sour milk or the mandrake babe; but I affirm these be things a witch would do if she could.

My Tragedy will be a medley (as I intend it to be

a medley) of laughter and tears, prose and verse, and in some places rhyme, songs, wit, pathos, humour, and, if possible, sublimity; at least it is not a fault in my intention if it does not comprehend most of these discordant atoms. Heaven send they dance not the "Dance of Death!" I hear that the Two Noble Englishmen have parted no sooner than they set foot on German earth; but I have not heard the reason. Possibly to give moralists an handle to exclaim, "Ah me! what things are perfect?" I think I shall adopt your emendation in the "Dying Lover," though I do not myself feel the objection against "Silent Prayer."

My tailor has brought me home a new coat lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me every body wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees, foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters; but to come upon me thus, in a full tide of luxury, neither becomes him as a tailor nor the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead. The villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and half-pence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he addrest them with profound gratitude, making a congee: "Gentlemen, I wish you good night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!" And this is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten buttons on a side, and a black velvet collar! A cursed ninth of a scoundrel!

When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as *Mr.* C. L. Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

LETTER LXVIII.] Dec. 27, 1798.

Dear Southey,—Your friend John May has formerly made kind offers to Lloyd of serving me in the India House, by the interest of his friend Sir Francis Baring. It is not likely that I shall ever put his goodness to the test on my own account, for my prospects are very comfortable; but I know a man, a young man, whom he could serve through the same channel, and, I think, would be disposed to serve if he were acquainted with his case. This poor fellow (whom I know just enough of to vouch for his strict integrity and worth) has lost two or three employments from illness, which he cannot regain; he was once insane, and, from the distressful uncertainty of his livelihood, has reason to apprehend a return of that malady. He has been for some time dependent on a woman whose lodger he formerly was, but who can ill afford to maintain him; and I know that on Christmas night last he actually walked about the streets all night, rather than accept of her bed, which she offered him, and offered herself to sleep in the kitchen; and that, in consequence of that severe cold, he is labouring under a bilious disorder, besides a depression of spirits, which incapacitates him from exertion when he most needs it. For God's sake, Southey, if it does not go against you to ask favours, do it now; ask it as for me: but do not do a violence to your feelings,

because he does not know of this application, and will suffer no disappointment. What I meant to say was this,—there are in the India House what are called *extra clerks*, not on the establishment, like me, but employed in extra business, by-jobs; these get about £50 a year, or rather more, but never rise. A director can put in at any time a young man in this office, and it is by no means considered so great a favour as making an established clerk. He would think himself as rich as an emperor if he could get such a certain situation, and be relieved from those disquietudes which, I do fear, may one day bring back his distemper.

You know John May better than I do, but I know enough to believe that he is a good man. He did make me that offer I have mentioned, but you will perceive that such an offer cannot authorize me in applying for another person.

But I cannot help writing to you on the subject, for the young man is perpetually before my eyes, and I shall feel it a crime not to strain all my petty interest to do him service, though I put my own delicacy to the question by so doing. I have made one other unsuccessful attempt already. At all events I will thank you to write, for I am tormented with anxiety. C. LAMB.

LETTER LXIX.] Jan. 21st, 1799.

I am requested by Lloyd to excuse his not replying to a kind letter received from you. He is at present situated in most distressful family perplexities, which I am not at liberty to explain, but they are such as to

demand all the strength of his mind, and quite exclude any attention to foreign objects. His brother Robert (the flower of his family) hath eloped from the persecutions of his father, and has taken shelter with me. What the issue of his adventure will be, I know not. He hath the sweetness of an angel in his heart, combined with admirable firmness of purpose; an uncultivated, but very original, and I think superior, genius. But this step of his is but a small part of their family troubles.

I am to blame for not writing to you before on *my own account;* but I know you can dispense with the expressions of gratitude, or I should have thanked you before for all May's kindness. He has liberally supplied the person I spoke to you of with money, and had procured him a situation just after himself had lighted upon a similar one, and engaged too far to recede. But May's kindness was the same, and my thanks to you and him are the same. May went about on this business as if it had been his own. But you knew John May before this, so I will be silent.

I shall be very glad to hear from you when convenient. I do not know how your Calendar and other affairs thrive; but above all, I have not heard a great while of your "Madoc"—the *opus magnum*. I would willingly send you something to give a value to this letter; but I have only one slight passage to send you, scarce worth the sending, which I want to edge in somewhere into my play, which, by the way, hath not received the addition of ten lines, besides, since I saw you. A father, old Walter Woodvil, (the witch's *protégé,*) relates this of his son John, who "fought in adverse armies," being a royalist, and his father a parliamentary man:—

"I saw him in the day of Worcester fight,
Whither he came at twice seven years,
Under the discipline of the Lord Falkland,
(His uncle by the mother's side,
Who gave his youthful politics a bent
Quite *from* the principles of his father's house;)
There did I see this valiant Lamb of Mars,
This sprig of honour, this unbearded John,
This veteran in green years, this sprout, this Woodvil,
(With dreadless ease guiding a fire-hot steed,
Which seem'd to scorn the manage of a boy,)
Prick forth with such a *mirth* into the field,
To mingle rivalship and acts of war
Even with the sinewy masters of the art.
You would have thought the work of blood had been
A play-game merely, and the rabid Mars
Had put his harmful hostile nature off,
To instruct raw youth in images of war,
And practice of the unedged players' foils.
The rough fanatic and blood-practised soldiery
Seeing such hope and virtue in the boy,
Disclosed their ranks to let him pass unhurt,
Checking their swords' uncivil injuries,
As loth to mar that curious workmanship
Of Valour's beauty portray'd in his face."

Lloyd objects to "portrayed in his face," do you? I like the line.

I shall clap this in somewhere. I think there is a spirit through the lines; perhaps the 7th, 8th, and 9th owe their origin to Shakspeare, though no image is borrowed.

He says in *Henry the Fourth*—

"This infant Hotspur,
Mars in swathing clothes."

But pray did Lord Falkland die before Worcester

fight? In that case I must make bold to unclify some other nobleman.

Kind love and respects to Edith.

C. LAMB.

LETTER LXX.] March 15th, 1799.

Dear Southey,—I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes's criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of "Joanna" you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on summer evening to see her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer this "Ruin'd Cottage" to any poem in the book. Indeed I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your "Hymn to the Penates," in a former volume.

I compare dissimilar things, as one would a rose and a star, for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to choose between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison.

The next best poem, I think, is the first Eclogue 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the "Funeral," I do not greatly admire. I miss

one, which had at least as good a title to publication as the "Witch," or the "Sailor's Mother." You call'd it the "Last of the Family." The "Old Woman of Berkeley" comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of Westminster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics, as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert, with so little alteration, his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for the spleen. The Parody is *not* so successful; it has one famous line, indeed, which conveys the finest death-bed image I ever met with:—

"The doctor, whisper'd the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said."

But the offering the bride three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard! In "Jaspar," the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The "Rose" is the only insipid piece in the volume; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness; and, besides, sets all chronology and probability at defiance.

"Cousin Margaret," you know, I like. The allusions to the *Pilgrim's Progress* are particularly happy, and harmonize tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes and accustomed objects: but what hath Apollidon and his sea-nymphs to do in these affairs? Apollyon I could have borne, though he stands for

the devil; but who is Apollidon? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly, with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem called "The Victory"—

"Be thou her comforter, who art the widow's friend;"

a single common-place line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to the many lines which describe suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency of a poem, not tagged to the end, like a "God send the good ship into harbour," at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the "Sailor" is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought, but I do not lay much claim to accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten upon particulars. After all, there is a great deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

Pray present my love to Edith.

C. L.

LETTER LXXI.] March 20th, 1799.

I am hugely pleased with your "Spider," "your old freemason," as you call him. The first three stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and Old Quarles, the kind of home-strokes, where

more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Robert Burns in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

"Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams,"

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes ten-fold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamnels, and Zillahs, and Madelons. I beg you will send me the "Holly Tree," if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened. Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophized a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge less successfully hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following, at unresembling distance, Sterne, and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our "poor earth-born companions." It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other

people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could, (I am in earnest,) to commence a series of these animals' poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts came across me: for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole. People bake moles alive by a slow oven fire to cure consumption. Rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads you know are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport. Then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping skates, &c., &c. would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you: I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good, and useful, full of pleasure, and full of moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part.

Poor Sam. Le Grice! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong

capacity of turning out something better.[1] I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship, and heartiest sympathy exprest both by word and deed and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, "that old spider," could have suck'd my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and, an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it; but I have no right to dismiss him from *my* regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal-times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.

God bless him for it, and God bless you, Southey.

C. L.

LETTER LXXII.] April 20, 1799.

The following is a second extract from my tragedy —*that is to be.* 'Tis narrated by an old Steward to Margaret, orphan ward of Sir Walter Woodvil. . . This and the Dying Lord I gave you are the only extracts I can give without mutilation. . . I expect you to like the old woman's curse :—

Old Steward.—One summer night, Sir Walter, as it chanced,
Was pacing to and fro in the avenue
That westward fronts our house,
Among those aged oaks, said to have been planted
Three hundred years ago
By a neighbouring Prior of the Woodvil name, &c.[1]

This is the extract I bragged of as superior to that I sent you from Marlow: perhaps you will smile. But I should like your remarks on the above, as you are deeper witch-read than I.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Rob. Southey, Esq.,
Mr. Cottle's, Bookseller.
High Street, Bristol.

LETTER LXXIII.] May 20, 1799.

Dear Southey,—I thank you heartily for your intended presents, but do by no means see the necessity

[1] See Poetical Pieces.

you are under of burthening yourself thereby. You have read old Wither's Supersedeas to small purpose. You object to my pauses being at the end of my lines; I do not know any great difficulty I should find in diversifying or changing my blank verse; but I go upon the model of Shakespeare in my Play, and endeavour after a colloquial ease and spirit, something like him. I could as easily imitate Milton's versification, but my ear and feeling would reject it, or any approaches to it, in the *drama*. I do not know whether to be glad or sorry that witches have been detected aforetimes in the shutting up of wombs. I certainly invented that conceit, and its coincidence with fact is accidental, for I never heard it. I have not seen those verses on Colonel Despard: I do not read any newspapers. Are they short to copy without much trouble? I should like to see them.

I just send you a few rhymes from my play, the only rhymes in it. A forest liver gives an account of his amusements:—

> What sports have you in the forest?
> Not many,—some few,—as thus,
> To see the sun to bed, to see him rise,
> Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
> Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him:
> With all his fires and travelling glories round him; &c.[1]

I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality: the first line is almost Shakespeare's:—

> "To have my love to bed and to arise."
> *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

[1] See Collected Pieces.

I think there is a sweetness in the versification not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and the last line but three is yours:

"An eye
"That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why."
Rosamund's Epistle.

I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing to show you. An idea for Leviathan: Commentators on Job have been puzzled to find out a meaning for Leviathan. 'Tis a whale, say some; a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture, Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord Mayor of London for the time being.

Rosamund sells well in London, malgre the non-revival of it. I sincerely wish you better health, and better health to Edith. Kind remembrances to her.

C. LAMB.

My sister Mary was never in better health or spirits than now.

LETTER LXXIV.] Oct. 31st, 1799.

Dear Southey,—I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the county to you, as you have done by Devonshire; but alas! I am a poor pen at that same.

I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bedroom, the "Judgment of Solomon" composing one pannel, and "Actæon spying Diana naked" the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints, and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces, and scenes of infancy.

I have given your address, and the books you want, to the Arches; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to their names. I have seen Gebor! Gebor aptly so denominated from Geborish, *quasi* Gibberish. But Gebor hath some lucid intervals. I remember darkly one beautiful simile veiled in uncouth phrases about the youngest daughter of the Ark. I shall have nothing to communicate, I fear, to the Anthology. You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them; but I think I would rather print it whole. Have you seen it, or shall I lend you a copy? I want your opinion of it.

I must get to business; so farewell. My kind remembrances to Edith. C. LAMB.

LETTER LXXV.]

Dear Southey,—You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward to him the news I now send I shall be obliged to you to lose no time. Dyer's sister-in-law,

who lives in St. Dunstan's Court, wrote to him about three weeks ago to the Hope Inn, Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert, or some such name, of Denmark Hill, has died, and left her husband a thousand pounds, and two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him; so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town now, and signing some papers, will save him a considerable sum of money; how, I don't understand; but it is very right he should hear of this. She has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with love to all at Keswick.

Dyer's brother, who by his wife's account has got £1000 left him, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece and factotum.—In haste,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

If you send George this, cut off the last paragraph.

Nov. 7, 1804.

D.'s laundress had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

LETTER LXXVI.]

Dear Southey,—I have received from Longman a copy of *Roderick*, with the Author's Compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way: the *Excursion*, Wordsworth's two last vols., and now *Roderick*, have come pouring in upon me like

some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. *Kehama* is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in *Roderick:* my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against Omnipotence, such disturbances of faith to the centre; the more potent the more painful the spell. Jove, and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter.—I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of *Kehama*, not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling; but *Roderick* is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the *Joan of Arc*. It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than *Madoc*. I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs, or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travels, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their

connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well-known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it: no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on first and second readings, perhaps, are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of the Palayos family first discovered—his being made king—"For acclamation one form must serve *more solemn for the breach* of *old observances*." Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

> "Towards the troop he spread his arms,
> As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
> And carried to all spirits *with the act*
> Its affluent inspiration."

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can nowhere be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's *Julian*. I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in

Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again: but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em—one of the serpent penance—is serious enough, now I think on't. Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whilere.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs. S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

London, 6th May, 1815.

The next present I look for is the *White Doe*.

Have you seen Mat. Betham's *Lay of Marie?* I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c.

R. Southey, Esq.,
Keswick, near Penrith,
Cumberland.

LETTER LXXVII.] Aug. 9th, 1815.

Dear Southey,—Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends, the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say, that Father Pardo had effected his escape, (the cunning greasy rogue!) and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd. I hear Buonaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your boute-feu (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses on this occasion? Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing. I think at least he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. Hedges, who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o'

nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. Hedges, upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage,[1] and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate. Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

After all, Buonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.

C. LAMB.

LETTER LXXVIII.] Monday, Oct. 26th, 1818.

Dear Southey,—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one, but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care

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[1] May 1, 1808, at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn.—H.

for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the "foundations of our empire in the East," I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent, but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but, after all, one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's "Vignettes?" Some of them, the second particularly, "To Lucy," are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all. C. L.

LETTER LXXIX.]

LETTER OF ELIA TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

[This was a letter published in the *London Magazine* for Oct., 1823. It will be found among the Collected Pieces.]

LETTER LXXX.] E. I. H., 21st November, 1823.

Dear Southey,—The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed *Q.R* had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the *Confessions of a D——d* was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill-meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wished both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us; but come and heap embers. We deserve it; I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

Do come early in the day, by sun-light, that you may see my *Milton*.

I am at Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington: a detached whitish house, close to the New River end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand from Sadler's Wells.[1]

Will you let me know the day before?

Your penitent, C. LAMB.

P.S.—I do not think your hand-writing at all like ****'s. I do not think many things I did think.

LETTER LXXXI.] August 19th, 1825.

Dear Southey,—You'll know who this letter comes from by opening slap-dash upon the text, as in the good old times. I never could come into the custom of envelopes; 'tis a modern foppery; the Plinian correspondence gives no hint of such. In singleness of sheet and meaning, then, I thank you for your little book. I am ashamed to add a codicil of thanks for your "Book of the Church." I scarce feel competent to give an opinion of the latter; I have not reading enough of that kind to venture at it. I

can only say the fact, that I have read it with attention and interest. Being, as you know, not quite a Churchman, I felt a jealousy at the Church taking to herself the whole deserts of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, from Druid extirpation downwards. I call all good Christians the Church, Capillarians and all. But I am in too light a humour to touch these matters. May all our churches flourish! Two things staggered me in the poem, (and one of them staggered both of us). I cannot away with a beautiful series of verses, as I protest they are, commencing "Jenner." 'Tis like a choice banquet opened with a pill or an electuary—physic stuff. T'other is, we cannot make out how Edith should be no more than ten years old. By'r Lady, we had taken her to be some sixteen or upwards. We suppose you have only chosen the round number for the metre. Or poem and dedication may be both older than they pretend to; but then some hint might have been given; for, as it stands, it may only serve some day to puzzle the parish reckoning. But without inquiring further, (for 'tis ungracious to look into a lady's years,) the dedication is eminently pleasing and tender, and we wish Edith May Southey joy of it. Something, too, struck us as if we had heard of the death of John May. A John May's death was a few years since in the papers. We think the tale one of the quietest, prettiest things we have seen. You have been temperate in the use of localities, which generally spoil poems laid in exotic regions. You mostly cannot stir out (in such things) for humming-birds and fireflies. A tree is a Magnolia, &c.—Can I but like the truly Catholic spirit? "Blame as thou mayest the Papist's erring creed"—which, and other passages,

brought me back to the old Anthology days, and the admonitory lesson to "Dear George" on "The Vesper Bell," a little poem which retains its first hold upon me strangely.

The compliment to the translatress is daintily conceived. Nothing is choicer in that sort of writing than to bring in some remote, impossible parallel,—as between a great empress and the mobtrusive quiet soul who digged her noiseless way so perseveringly through that rugged Paraguay mine. How she Dobrizhoffered it all out, it puzzles my slender Latinity to conjecture. Why do you seem to sanction Landor's unfeeling allegorizing away of honest Quixote! He may as well say Strap is meant to symbolize the Scottish nation before the Union, and Random since that act of dubious issue; or that Partridge means the Mystical Man, and Lady Bellaston typifies the Woman upon Many Waters. Gebir, indeed, may mean the state of the hop markets last month, for any thing I know to the contrary. That all Spain overflowed with romancical books (as Madge Newcastle calls them) was no reason that Cervantes should not smile at the matter of them; nor even a reason that, in another mood, he might not multiply them, deeply as he was tinctured with the essence of them. Quixote is the father of gentle ridicule, and at the same time the very depository and treasury of chivalry and highest notions. Marry, when somebody persuaded Cervantes that he meant only fun, and put him upon writing that unfortunate Second Part with the confederacies of that unworthy duke and most contemptible duchess, Cervantes sacrificed his instinct to his understanding.

We got your little book but last night, being at Enfield, to which place we came about a month since, and are having quiet holydays. Mary walks her twelve miles a day some days, and I my twenty on others. 'Tis all holyday with me now, you know. The change works admirably.

For literary news, in my poor way, I have a one-act farce going to be acted at the Haymarket; but when? is the question. 'Tis an extravaganza, and like enough to follow *Mr. H.* The *London Magazine* has shifted its publishers once more, and I shall shift myself out of it. It is fallen. My ambition is not at present higher than to write nonsense for the play-houses, to eke out a somewhat contracted income. *Tempus erat.* There was a time, my dear Cornwallis, when the Muse, &c. But I am now in Mac Fleckno's predicament,—

"Promised a play, and dwindled to a farce."

Coleridge is better (was, at least, a few weeks since) than he has been for years. His accomplishing his book at last has been a source of vigour to him. We are on a half visit to his friend Allsop, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Enfield, but expect to be at Colebrook Cottage in a week or so, where, or anywhere, I shall be always most happy to receive tidings from you. G. Dyer is in the height of an uxorious paradise. His honeymoon will not wane till he wax cold. Never was a more happy pair since Acme and Septimius, and longer. Farewell, with many thanks, dear S. Our loves to all round your Wrekin.

Your old friend,

C. LAMB.

LETTER LXXXII.] May 10th, 1830.

Dear Southey,—My friend Hone, whom you would like *for a friend*, I found deeply impressed with your generous notice of him in your beautiful *Life of Bunyan*, which I am just now full of. He has written to you for leave to publish a certain good-natured letter. I write not this to enforce his request, for we are fully aware that the refusal of such publication would be quite consistent with all that is good in your character. Neither he nor I expect it from you, nor exact it; but if you would consent to it, you would oblige me by it, as well as him. He is just now in a critical situation: kind friends have opened a coffee-house for him in the City, but their means have not extended to the purchase of coffee-pots, credit for Reviews, newspapers, and other paraphernalia. So I am sitting in the skeleton of a possible divan. What right I have to interfere, you best know. Look on me as a dog who went once temporarily insane, and bit you, and now begs for a crust. Will you set your wits to a dog?

Our object is to open a subscription, which my friends of the *Times* are most willing to forward for him, but think that a leave from you to publish would aid it.

But not an atom of respect or kindness will or shall it abate in either of us if you decline it. Have this strongly in your mind.

Those *Every-Day* and *Table* Books will be a treasure a hundred years hence, but they have failed to make Hone's fortune.

Here his wife and all his children are about me,

gaping for coffee customers; but how should they come in, seeing no pot boiling!

Enough of Hone. I saw Coleridge a day or two since. He has had some severe attack, not paralytic; but if I had not heard of it I should not have found it out. He looks, and especially speaks, strong. How are all the Wordsworths and all the Southeys? whom I am obliged to you if you have not brought up haters of the name of

C. LAMB.

P.S.—I have gone lately into the acrostic line. I find genius (such as I had) declines with me, but I get clever. Do you know any body that wants charades, or such things, for Albums? I do 'em at so much a sheet. Perhaps an epigram (not a very happy-gram) I did for a school-boy yesterday may amuse. I pray Jove he may not get a flogging for any false quantity; but 'tis, with one exception, the only Latin verses I have made for forty years; and I did it "to order."

(Here follow the Latin verses "Cuique Suum."[1])

I write from Hone's; therefore Mary cannot send her love to Mrs. Southey, but I do.

Yours ever, C. L.

[1] See the Poetical Pieces.

III.

Correspondence with the Wordsworths.

Letter LXXXIII.] Oct. 13th, 1800.

Dear Wordsworth,—I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is, (and why should I not confess it?) I am not plethorically abounding in cash at this present. Merit, God knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is "contented with little, yet wishing for more." Now, the books you wish for would require some pounds, which, I am sorry to say, I have not by me; so I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your town banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of it to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely; for it is a scurvy thing to cry, "Give me the money first," and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries; but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it! The books which you want, I calculate at about £8. Ben Jonson is a guinea book. Beaumont and Fletcher, in folio, the right folio not now to be met with; the octavos are about £3. As to any other dramatists, I do not know where to find them, except what are in Dodsley's Old Plays, which are about £3 also. Massinger I never saw but at

one shop, and it is now gone; but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve, and the rest of King Charles's moralists, are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will inquire after; but I fear Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old poets and dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for, I suppose you do not include the £20 edition of *Hamlet*, single play, which Kemble has. Marlowe's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakspeare. Let me know your will and pleasure soon, for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self, is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency, without the penalty usually annexed.

C. LAMB.

LETTER LXXXIV.] Jan. 30th, 1801.

I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I

have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the very women of the Town; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old-book stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books,) for groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog, (only exceeding him in knowledge,) wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not

enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind: and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.[1]

Give my kindest love, and my sister's, to D. and yourself; and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.[2] Thank you for liking my play.

C. L.

LETTER LXXXV.] About 1803.

Thanks for your letter and present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most pleases me is, "The Song of Lucy." *Simon's sickly daughter*, in "The Sexton," made me *cry*. Next to these are

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[1] Alluding to the Inscription of Wordsworth's, entitled "Joanna," containing a magnificent description of the effect of laughter echoing amidst the great mountains of Westmoreland.—T.

[2] Alluding to Wordsworth's poem, *The Pet Lamb*.—T.

the description of these continuous echoes in the story of "Joanna's Laugh," where the mountains, and all the scenery absolutely seem alive; and that fine Shakspearian character of the "happy man," in the "Brothers,"

> ——— "that creeps about the fields,
> Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
> Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
> Into his face, until the setting sun
> Write Fool upon his forehead!"

I will mention one more—the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the "Cumberland Beggar," that he may have about him the melody of birds, although he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feeling for the Beggar's, and in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish. The "Poet's Epitaph" is disfigured, to my taste, by the common satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of "pin-point," in the sixth stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the "Beggar," that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, "I will teach you how to think upon this subject." This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne, and in many novelists and modern poets, who continually put a sign-post up to show where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid; very different from *Robinson Crusoe*, the

Vicar of Wakefield, *Roderick Random*, and other beautiful, bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between author and reader; "I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it." Modern novels, *St. Leons* and the like, are full of such flowers as these—"Let not my reader suppose," "Imagine, if you can, modest!" &c. I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation. . . . . I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his *Ancient Marinere*, a *Poet's Reverie*; it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical representation of a lion. What new idea is gained by this title but one subversive of all credit—which the tale should force upon us—of its truth!

For me, I was never so affected with any human tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days. I dislike all the miraculous part of it; but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery, dragged me along like Tom Pipe's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the *Marinere* should have had a character and profession. This is a beauty in *Gulliver's Travels*, where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the *Ancient Marinere* undergoes such trials as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was—like the state of a man in a bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is, that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is, I think as well, a little unfounded: the "Marinere," from being conversant in supernatural events, *has* acquired a supernatural and

strange cast of *phrase*, eye, appearance, &c., which frighten the "wedding guest." You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see.

To sum up a general opinion of the second volume, I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the *Ancient Marinere*, and the "Mad Mother," and the "Lines at Tintern Abbey" in the first.

LETTER LXXXVI.] 14th June, 1805.

My dear Miss Wordsworth,—Your long kind letter has not been thrown away (for it has given me great pleasure to find you are all resuming your old occupations, and are better); but poor Mary, to whom it is addressed, cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me, and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have in this case contributed to her indisposition. But when she discovers symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is, bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that, for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot

always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool, bereft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong; so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. To say all that I know of her would be more than I think any body could believe, or even understand; and when I hope to have her well again with me, it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older and wiser and better than I, and all my wretched imperfections I 'cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me; and I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed drinking and ways of going on. But even in this upbraiding of myself, I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade. I am stupid, and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid. I am sure you will excuse my writing any more, I am so very poorly.

I cannot resist transcribing three or four lines which poor Mary made upon a picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an auction only one week before she left home. She was then beginning to show signs of ill boding. They are sweet lines and upon a sweet picture; but I send them only as the last memorial of her.

"VIRGIN AND CHILD, L. DA VINCI.

"Maternal Lady, with thy virgin grace,
Heaven-born, thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee."

You had her lines about the "Lady Blanch." You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung in our room. 'Tis light and pretty:—

"Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanch, the lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me
Who in thy lifetime thou mightst be?
Thou pretty art and fair,
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.
No need for Blanch her history to tell,
Whoever saw her face, they there did read it well;
But when I look on thee, I only know
There lived a pretty maid some hundred years ago."

This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is my next wish to Mary's recovery.

I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait.

It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand, which my wise conduct has already encroach'd upon one half. My best love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs. Clarkson, and better health to her, when you see or write to her.

CHARLES LAMB.

LETTER LXXXVII.] June 26th, 1805.

Mary is just stuck fast in "All's Well that Ends Well."[1] She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boys' clothes. She begins to think Shakspeare must have wanted imagination! I, to encourage her, (for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work,) flatter her with telling her how well such a play and such a play is done.

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[1] Miss Lamb was now engaged on the "Tales from Shakespeare," which were published in 1807. She contributed the Comedy tales, and Lamb himself adapted the Tragedies.

It was advertised as by *Charles* Lamb alone, at the end of a little volume printed in 1810:—

"Written by Charles Lamb,

"Tales from Shakespear, with 20 Engravings, 2 vols., 8*s*."

In the same place are the following Notices:—

"Adventures of Ulysses. With a superb Frontispiece, and Title-page, 4*s*."

"Mrs. Leicester's School, or the History of Several Young Ladies, Related by Themselves. The Third Edition. With a beautiful Frontispiece. Price 3*s*. 6*d*.

"Poetry for Children, Entirely Original. By the Author of Mrs. Leicester's School. With Frontispieces, 2 vols. price 3*s*.

"N.B.—Each volume may be had separate."—H.

But she is stuck fast, and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this, it will be necessary to leave off tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before, for I sometimes think it does not agree with me. Wm. Hazlitt is in town. I took him to see a very pretty girl, professedly, where there were two young girls; (the very head and sum of the girlery was two young girls;) they neither laughed, nor sneered, nor giggled, nor whispered—but they were young girls—and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as youth and beauty, till he tore me away before supper, in perfect misery, and owned he could not bear young girls; they drove him mad. So I took him home to my old nurse, where he recovered perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an author, I take it, is never to pay any thing. But *non cuivis contigit adire Corinthum.* The managers, I thank my stars, have settled that question for me.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

LETTER LXXXVIII.] Sept. 28th, 1805.

My dear Wordsworth, (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right,) I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy, (or, which I believe is the true state of the case, so diffident,) that it

must revert to me as usual. Though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them: and that, and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy), often deters her, where no other reason does.[1]

We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am; so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us, not unaptly, Gum-Boil and Tooth-Ache, for they used to say that a gum-boil is a great relief to a tooth-ache.

We have been two tiny excursions this Summer, for three or four days each, to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our rustications this year. Alas! how poor a round to Skiddaw and Helvellyn, and Borrowdale, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802! Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that "last infirmity of noble minds," and her cow. Fate need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her; and in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner.

I hope, by "southwards," you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favourite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times

[1] This is mere banter; Miss Lamb wrote a very good hand.—T

we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too; our kindest separate remembrances to him. As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job; and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce, but hitherto all schemes have gone off; an idle brag or two of an evening, vapouring out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my "sweet enemy," Tobacco, I shall perhaps set nobly to work. Hang work!

I wish that all the year were holiday; I am sure that indolence—indefeasible indolence—is the true state of man, and business the invention of the old Teazer, whose interference doomed Adam to an apron and set him a hoeing. Pen and ink, and clerks and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer some thousand years after, under pretence of "Commerce allying distant shores, promoting and diffusing knowledge, good," &c. &c.

I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my "Friendly Traitress." Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years; and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote "Hester Savory." I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that

cares for poetry; and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to show you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The "Tobacco," being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes), perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then, every body will have seen it that I wish to see it, I having sent it to Malta.[1]

I remain, dear W. and D., yours truly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER LXXXIX.] June, 1806.

Dear Wordsworth,—We are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs. W——. Hope all is well over by this time. "A fine boy. Have you any more?—one more and a girl—poor copies of me!" vide *Mr. H.*, a farce which the proprietors have done me the honour ——; but I will set down Mr. Wroughton's own words. N. B. The ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote, begging to know if my piece had any chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I writing on Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend!

[Copy of a Letter from Mr. R. Wroughton.]

"Sir,—Your piece of *Mr. H.*, I am desired to say,

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[1] The "Farewell to Tobacco" was transcribed on the next page; but the actual sacrifice was not completed until some years after.—T.

is accepted at Drury Lane Theatre, by the proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forwards when the proper opportunity serves. The piece shall be sent to you, for your alterations, in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my hands, but with the proprietors.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"RICHARD WROUGHTON.

[Dated]
"66, Gower Street,
"Wednesday, June 11, 1806."

On the following Sunday Mr. Tobin comes. The scent of a manager's letter brought him. He would have gone further any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces, different sorts of pieces; what is the best way of offering a piece, how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece, how to judge of the merits of a piece, how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted; and my piece, and your piece, and my poor brother's piece—my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted. I am not sure that, when my poor brother bequeathed the care of his pieces to Mr. Tobin, he did not therein convey a legacy which in some measure mollified the otherwise first stupefactions of grief. It cannot be expected that the present Earl Nelson passes all his time in watering the laurels of the admiral with Right-Reverend Tears. Certainly he steals a fine day now and then to plot how to lay out the grounds and mansion at Burnham most suitable to the late Earl's taste, if he had lived, and how to spend the

hundred thousand pounds which Parliament has given him in erecting some little neat monument to his memory.

I wrote *Mr. H.* in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The managers, I thank my stars, have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty after the very flattering letter which I have received.

ADMIT
TO
BOXES.
MR. H.
Ninth Night.
CHARLES LAMB.

I think this will be as good a pattern for orders as I can think on. A little thin flowery border, round, neat, not gaudy, and the Drury Lane Apollo, with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo? —simply nothing? Or perhaps the comic muse?

The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but then if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Ch. Lamb* will do.

BOXES, now I think on it, I'll have in capitals. The rest, in a neat Italian hand. Or better, perhaps Boxes, in old English characters, like "Madoc" or "Thalaba?"

C. L.

Feb. 1st, 1806.

A-propos of Spenser, (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an *a-propos*,) I

was discoursing on poetry (as one's apt to deceive one's self, and when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same, as lovers do) with a young gentleman of my office, who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal modern poets, and I happened to mention Epithalamiums, and that I could show him a very fine one of Spenser's. At the mention of this, my gentleman, who is a very fine gentleman, and is brother to the Miss Evans whom Coleridge so narrowly escaped marrying, pricked up his ears and expressed great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length), he should be very happy to see *any thing by him*. Then pausing, and looking sad, he ejaculated "POOR SPENCER!" I begged to know the reason of his ejaculation, thinking that time had by this time softened down any calamities which the bard might have endured. "Why, póor fellow," said he, "he has lost his wife!" "Lost his wife!" said I, "whom are you talking of?" "Why, Spencer," said he; "I've read the *Monody* he wrote on the occasion, and *a very pretty thing it is*." This led to an explanation (it could be delayed no longer), that the sound Spenser, which, when poetry is talked of, generally excites an image of an old bard in a ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sydney, and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my gentleman a quite contrary image of the Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are published with Lady Di. Beauclerk's designs. Nothing like defining of terms when we talk. What

blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable criticism, but for this timely explanation!

N.B. At the beginning of *Edm.* Spenser (to prevent mistakes), I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers's on Shakspeare, a sonnet of Spenser's never printed among his poems. It is curious, as being manly, and rather Miltonic, and as a sonnet of Spenser's with nothing in it about love or knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you.

C. L.

LETTER XC.] December 11th, 1806.

Mary's love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write.

Dear Wordsworth,—*Mr. H.* came out last night, and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *letter*. We are pretty stout about it; have had plenty of condoling friends; but, after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard!—a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted, and set no great store by; and *Mr. H.!!* The number of friends we had in the house—my brother and I being in public offices, &c.—was astonishing, but they yielded at length to a few hisses.

A hundred hisses! (Damn the word, I write it like kisses—how different!)—a hundred hisses outweigh a thousand claps. The former come more directly from the heart. Well, 'tis withdrawn, and there is an end.

Better luck to us. C. LAMB.

[*Turn over.*]

P.S. Pray, when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Christmas, as I shall have but a day or two, and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well.

LETTER XCI.]

Dear Wordsworth—We have book'd off from Swan and Two Necks, Lad Lane, this day (per Coach) the Tales from Shakespear. You will forgive the plates, when I tell you they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the bad baby, who from mischief (I suppose) has chosen one from damn'd beastly vulgarity (vide *Merch. Venice*) where no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it; to another has given a name which exists not in the tale, Nic Bottom, and which she thought would be funny, though in this I suspect *his* hand, for I guess her reading does not reach far enough to know Bottom's christian name; and one of Hamlet and grave digging, a scene which is not hinted at in the

story, and you might as well have put King Canute the Great reproving his courtiers. The rest are giants and giantesses. Suffice it, to save our taste and damn our folly, that we left it all to a friend, W. G., who in the first place cheated me into putting a name to them, which I did not mean, but do not repent, and then wrote a puff about their *simplicity*, &c. to go with the advertisement as in my name! Enough of this egregious dupery. I will try to abstract the load of teazing circumstances from the stories and tell you that I am answerable for *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Timon*, *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, for occasionally a tail-piece or correction of grammar, for none of the cuts and all of the spelling. The rest is my Sister's.——We think Pericles of hers the best, and Othello of mine; but I hope all have some good. *As you like It*, we like least. So much, only begging you to tear out the cuts and give them to Johnny, as "Mrs. Godwin's fancy"!!—

C. L.

Thursday, 29th Jan. 1807.

Our love to all.

I had almost forgot, My part of the Preface begins in the middle of a sentence, in last but one page, after a colon, thus—

:—*which if they be happily so done, &c.*

the former part hath a more feminine turn and does hold me up something as an instructor to young ladies: but upon my modesty's honour I wrote it not.

Godwin told my Sister that the Baby chose the subjects: a fact in taste.

LETTER XCII.] Friday, 19th Oct. 1810. E. I. Ho.

Dear W.,—Mary has been very ill, which you have heard, I suppose, from the Montagues. She is very weak and low-spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject, and it goes to the bottom. In particular I was pleased with your translation of that turgid epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a test. But what is the reason we have no good epitaphs after all?

A very striking instance of your position might be found in the churchyard of Ditton-upon-Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton-upon-Thames has been blessed by the residence of a poet, who for love or money, I do not well know which, has dignified every grave-stone, for the last few years, with bran-new verses, all different, and all ingenious, with the author's name at the bottom of each. This sweet Swan of Thames has so artfully diversified his strains and his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice; more justly, perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug usher at his desk in the intervals of instruction, levelling his pen. Of death, as it consists of dust and worms, and mourners and uncertainty, he had never thought; but the word "death" he had often seen separate and conjunct with other words, till he had learned to speak of all its

attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word "God" in a pulpit; and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a skull that never reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or further than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the sounding-board of the pulpit.

But the epitaphs were trim, and sprag, and patent, and pleased the survivors of Thames-Ditton above the old mumpsimus of "Afflictions Sore." . . . . To do justice though, it must be owned that even the excellent feeling which dictated this dirge when new must have suffered something in passing through so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington churchyard (I think) an Epitaph to an infant who died "*Ætatis* four months," with this seasonable inscription appended, "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land," &c. Sincerely wishing your children long life to honour, &c.,

I remain, C. LAMB.

LETTER XCIII.] Nov. 23, 1810.

We are in a pickle. Mary, from her affectation of physiognomy, has hired a stupid big country wench, who looked honest, as she thought, and has been doing her work some days, but without eating—eats no butter, nor meat, but prefers cheese with her tea for breakfast; and now it comes out that she was

ill when she came, with lifting her mother about (who is now with God) when she was dying, and with riding up from Norfolk, four days and nights in the waggon. She got advice yesterday, and took something which has made her bring up a quart of blood, and she now lies in her bed, a dead weight upon our humanity, incapable of getting up, refusing to go into an hospital, having nobody in town but a poor asthmatic uncle whose son lately married a drab who fills his house, and there is nowhere she can go, and she seems to have made up her mind to take her flight to heaven from our bed. Oh for the little wheelbarrow which trundled the hunchback from door to door to try the various charities of different professions of mankind! Here's her uncle just crawled up. He is far liker Death than she. Oh the Parish, the Parish, the hospital, the infirmary, the charnel-house! —these are places meet for such guests, not our quiet mansion, where nothing but affluent plenty and literary ease should abound.—Howard's House, Howard's House, or where the Paralytic descended through the sky-light (what a God's gift!) to get at our Saviour. In this perplexity such topics as Spanish papers and Monkhouses sink into comparative insignificance. What shall we do? If she died, it were something: gladly would I pay the coffin-maker, and the bell-man and searchers. C. L.

To Miss Wordsworth,
Grasmere,
near Kendal,
Westmoreland.

LETTER XCIV.] 1814.

My dear W.—I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is, owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H., owing to bad peace speculations in the calico market. (I write this to W. W., Esq., Collector of Stamp Duties for the conjoint Northern Counties, not to W. W., Poet.) I go back, and have for many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work, too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book,[1] which Hazlitt has uncivilly kept, only two days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain. It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday), that the book was like a mountain landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice; I perceive beauty dizzily. Now, what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half-day, or hour even, till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get four weeks' absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin, I will most gladly do what is required, though I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory, and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a "work" methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is, to let me know from Southey, if that will be time enough

[1] The *Excursion*.—F.

for the *Quarterly*, *i. e.* suppose it done in three weeks from this date (19th Sept.): if not, it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you, and feels highly grateful for your "Patent of Nobility," and acknowledges the author of the *Excursion* as the legitimate Fountain of Honour. We both agree that, to our feeling, Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry: the fact is explicable; but how few are those to whom it would have been rendered explicit! The unlucky reason of the detention of the *Excursion* was Hazlitt and we having a misunderstanding. He blowed us up about six months ago, since which the union hath snapt; but M. Burney borrowed it for him, and after reiterated messages I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigour in them;[1] particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen.* I forget the passage, but the whole wore a slovenly air of despatch. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech.[2] That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of

[1] This refers to an article of Hazlitt's on the *Excursion* in the *Examiner*, very fine in passages, but more characteristic of the critic than descriptive of the poem.—T.

[2] The passage in which the copy of *Candide*, found in the apartment of the Recluse, is described as "the dull production of a scoffer's brain," which had excited Hazlitt to energetic vindication of Voltaire from the charge of dulness. Whether the work, written to mockery of human hopes, be dull, I will not venture to determine; but I do not hesitate, at any risk, to avow a conviction that no book in the world is more adapted to make a good man wretched.—T.

his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish *Candide*. I know I tried to get through it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the dulness. Now I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

I finish this after a raw ill-baked dinner fast gobbled up to set me off to office again, after working there till near four. Oh how I wish I were a rich man! even though I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting through that needle's eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos; are you a Christian? or is it the Pedler and the Priest that are?

I find I miscalled that celestial splendour of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shows my inaccuracy of head.

Do, pray, indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am ashamed to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the first week in October. God send I may not be disappointed in that! Coleridge swore in a letter to me he would review the *Excursion* in the *Quarterly*. Therefore, though *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do any thing *when* done, I must know of him if he has any thing ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclaims.

I keep writing on, knowing the postage is no more for much writing, else so fagged and dispirited I am with cursed India House work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on the *Excursion*. I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed book

C. LAMB.

LETTER XCV.] 1814.

Dear W.—Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of the *Excursion* does, *toto cœlo*, differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But, with a little explanation, you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London tailor. What freaks tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common, moderate, self-enjoyment of the rest of mankind. A flying tailor, I venture to say, is no more *in rerum naturâ* than a flying horse or a gryphon. His wheeling his airy flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the art of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common, uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again, the person who makes his smiles to be *heard* is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac tailor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light-headedness for light-heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me.—Enough of tailors!

The "'scapes" of the great god Pan, who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas—W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Lofft wrote to *M[onthly] M[agazine]* Philips, (now Sir Richard,) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article of Pan, signed H., and adding, "I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas." Hylas had put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Lofft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realised! I can conceive him being "good to all that wander in that perilous flood." One J. Scott,[1] (I know no more) is editor of the *Champion*.[2] Where is Coleridge?

That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long, as it will seem to have done, from its postponement. I write with great difficulty, and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off gin. I hope you will see good-will in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all panegyric;

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[1] Afterwards the distinguished and unfortunate Editor of the *Monthly Magazine*.—T.

[2] To this journal Lamb contributed a few pieces. The Editor later fell in a duel, arising out of one of the fierce literary quarrels of the day.—F.

I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am, in mind, distant from you or your poem, but that both are close to me, among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts, and determined upon not giving one that had been in the *Examiner;* for extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowance of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of *Sir Alfred Irthing*, and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the poem. Hazlitt had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Gifford and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect.[1] Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad.

C. LAMB.

LETTER XCVI.] 1814.

Dear Wordsworth—I told you my Review was a very imperfect one.[1] But what you will see in the *Quarterly* is a spurious one, which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palmed upon it for mine. I never felt more

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[1] It is curious to see how this foreboding was to be justified. As the article, in spite of the alterations, is substantially Lamb's, it has been retained among his collected pieces.—F.

vexed in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it, out of spite at me, because he once suffered me to be called a lunatic in his Review.[1] The *language* he has altered throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was, in point of composition, the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ: and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm, if it had any, is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one.

I have not the cursed alteration by me; I shall never look at it again; but for a specimen, I remember I had said the poet of the *Excursion* "walks through common forests as through some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher love-lays." It is now (besides half-a-dozen alterations in the same half-dozen lines) "but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him;"—that is one I remember.

But that would have been little, putting his damn'd shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) instead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend;—for I reckon myself a dab at *prose*;—verse I leave to my

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1 In alluding to Lamb's note on the great scene of the *Broken Heart*, where *Calantha* dances on, after hearing at every pause of some terrible calamity, a writer in the *Quarterly Review* had affected to excuse the writer as a "maniac;" a suggestion which circumstances rendered most cruel.—T.

betters: God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter! I have read "It won't do."[1] But worse than altering words: he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your "Scheme of Harmonies," as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the extracts as if they came in as a part of the text naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as, without conjuration, no man could tell what I was driving at. A proof of it you may see (though not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words. I had spoken something about "natural methodism;" and after follows, "and *therefore* the tale of Margaret should have been postponed" (I forget my words, or his words); now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before as they are from the 104th Psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are well founded. I know how sore a word altered makes one; but, indeed, of this review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy

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1 Though the article on the *Excursion*, in the *Edinburgh Review*, commenced "This will never do!" it contained ample illustrations of the author's genius, and helped the world to disprove its oracular beginning.—T.

for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew; but for the *writing part* of it I was fully satisfied; I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone; and what is left is, of course, the worse for their having been there; the eyes are pulled out, and the bleeding sockets are left.

I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamed to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labours of years turned into contempt by scoundrels!

But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression, (I know there were many,) every warm expression, (there was nothing else,) is vulgarised and frozen. But if they catch me in their camps again, let them spitchcock me! They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it; and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford, I suppose, never waived a right he had since he commenced author. God confound him and all caitiffs!

C. L.

LETTER XCVII.] Aug. 14, 1814.

Dear Wordsworth,—I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great armful of poetry which you have sent me; and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M.

Burney came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read—a day in Heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Churchyard;—the only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time, and not duly taken away again,[1]—the deaf man and the blind man;—the Jacobite and the Hanoverian, whom antipathies reconcile; the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude;—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as when I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this best of books upon the best subjects for partial naming. That gorgeous sunset is famous;[2] I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury Plain five years ago, that drew Phillips from the card-table, where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequalled set; but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified, such as the prophets saw them in that sunset—the wheel, the potter's clay, the wash-pot, the wine-press, the almond-tree rod, the baskets of figs, the fourfold visaged head, the throne, and Him that sat thereon.[3]

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[1] The poem, "We are Seven."—F.

[2] The passage to which the allusion applies does not picture a sunset, but the effect of sunlight on a receding mist among the mountains, in the second book of the *Excursion*.—T.

[3] "Fix'd resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,

One feeling I was particularly struck with, as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure, the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming properties of a country church just entered; a certain fragrance which it has, either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country, exactly what you have reduced into words; but I am feeling that which I cannot express. Reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument in Harrow Church. Do you know it? with its fine long spire, white as washed marble, to be seen, by vantage of its high site, as far as Salisbury spire itself almost.

I shall select a day or two, very shortly, when I am coolest in brain, to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me. There is a great deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or south-countryman entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it, that by your system it was doubtful whether a liver in towns had a soul to be saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

Save for a late excursion to Harrow, and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this Summer, rural

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But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest powers,
For admiration and mysterious awe."—T.

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images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent, all that was country-fy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very colour of green is vanished; the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (*Arabia Arenosa*), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there. Booths and drinking-places go all round it for a mile and half, I am confident—I might say two miles in circuit. The stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air, and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park.

Order after order has been issued by Lord Sidmouth in the name of the Regent (acting in behalf of his Royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The *vis unita* of all the publicans in London, Westminster, Marylebone, and miles round, is too powerful a force to put down. The Regent has raised a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay probably for ever. The whole beauty of the place is gone—that lake-look of the Serpentine—it has got foolish ships upon it; but something whispers to have confidence in Nature and its revival—

> At the coming of the *milder day*,
> These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Meantime I confess to have smoked one delicious pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths; a tent rather—

> "Oh call it not a booth!"

erected by the public spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras, (the ale-houses have all emigrated, with their train of bottles, mugs, corkscrews, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole ale-houses, with all their ale!) in company with some of the

Guards that had been in France, and a fine French girl, habited like a princess of banditti, which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene in Hyde Park, by candle-light, in open air,—good tobacco, bottled stout, —made it look like an interval in a campaign, a rêpose after battle. I almost fancied scars smarting, and was ready to club a story with my comrades of some of my lying deeds. After all, the fireworks were splendid; the rockets in clusters, in trees and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in space (like unbroke horses,) till some of Newton's calculations should fix them; but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em, and the still finer showers of gloomy rain-fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could go to bed without dreaming of the last day, must be as hardened an atheist as . . . . .

The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to Dorothea. Will none of you ever be in London again?

Again let me thank you for your present, and assure you that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it, (which I trust I shall often,) and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.

With kindest remembrances to you and your household, we remain, yours sincerely,

C. Lamb and Sister.

LETTER XCVIII.] [1815.]

Dear Wordsworth,—You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes, to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a character in the antithetic manner, which I do not know why you left out,—the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it, in my mind, less complete,—and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it), "the stone-chat, and the glancing sand-piper," which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice; I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement, as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the "friendly reader," but the "malicious" will take it to himself. Damn 'em, if you give 'em an inch, &c. The Preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur*,—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I would rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those of which I had no previous knowledge, the "Four

Yew Trees,"[1] and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—"Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow." It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. "Laodamia" is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture-collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way, which comes not every day, the Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had! all laid out upon town schemes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is, that your "Power of Music" reminded me of his poem of "The Ballad Singer in the Seven Dials." Do you remember

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[1] The poem on the four great yew trees of Borrowdale, which the poet has, by the most potent magic of the imagination, converted into a temple for the ghastly forms of Death and Time "to meet at noontide,"—a passage surely not surpassed in any English poetry written since the days of Milton.—T.

his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A B C? which, after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's "Principia." I was lately fatiguing myself with going through a volume of fine words by Lord Thurlow; excellent words; and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regales; but what an aching vacuum of matter! I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to Bourne. What a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, *matter-ful* creature! sucking from every flower, making a flower of every thing, his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?

I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from those first poems,[1] or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do altogether. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original, which I possess as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading. We were glad to see the poems "by a female friend."[2] The one of the Wind is masterly, but

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1 The "Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches among the Alps"—Wordsworth's earliest poems—now happily restored in their entirety to their proper places in the poet's collected works.—T.

2 By Miss Dorothea Wordsworth.—T.

not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner, and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better instructed. As it is, expect a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it. I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged, and like to be. On Friday I was at office from ten in the morning (two hours dinner except) to eleven at night; last night till nine. My business and office business in general have increased so; I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till four, and do not keep a holiday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red-letter days, and some five days besides, which I used to dub Nature's holidays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life, I may reckon two-thirds as dead, for time that a man may call his own is his life; and hard work and thinking about it taints even the leisure hours,—stains Sunday with work-day contemplations. This is Sunday: and the head-ache I have is part late hours at work the two preceding nights, and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwards. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort—

> "To them each evening had its glittering star,
> And every Sabbath Day its golden sun"—

to such straits am I driven for the life of life, Time! O that from that superfluity of holiday leisure my youth wasted, "Age might but take some hours youth wanted not!" N.B.—I have left off spirituous liquors

for four or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting.[1] Farewell, dear Wordsworth!

O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! from some returned English I hear that not such a thing as a counting-house is to be seen in her streets,—scarce a desk. Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its "gripple merchants," as Drayton hath it—"born to be the curse of this brave isle!" I invoke this, not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

Farewell, in haste, from a head that is too ill to methodize, a stomach too weak to digest, and all out of tune. Better harmonies await you!

C. LAMB.

LETTER XCIX.

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write *in formâ*.

1815

Dear Wordsworth,—The more I read of your last two volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgments for them in more than one short letter. The "Night Piece," to which you refer me, I meant fully to have noticed; but, the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with the fears of it, that

[1] Alas for moral certainty in this moral but mortal world! Lamb's resolution to leave off spirituous liquors was a brave one, but he strengthened and rewarded it by such copious libations of porter, that his sister, for whose sake mainly he attempted the sacrifice, entreated him to "live like himself," and in a few weeks after this assurance he obeyed her.—T.

when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk about Vincent Bourne, or any casual image, instead of that which I had meditated, (by the way, I must look out V. B. for you). So I meant to mention "Yarrow Visited," with that stanza, "But thou that didst appear so fair;"[1] than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry;—yet the poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined, in the most delicate manner, to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the last two: this is all fine, except perhaps that *that* of "studious ease and generous cares" has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale" is a charming counterpart to "Poor Susan," with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the "Old Thief and the Boy by his side," which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition; "Susan" stood for the representative of poor *Rus in Urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; "bright volumes of vapour,"

[1] "But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation."—T.

&c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her "a poor outcast" seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the Boy-builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now,—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that "Light-hearted boys, I will build up a Giant with you." It comes naturally, with a warm holiday, and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet, that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a maying. (N.B.) I don't often go out a *maying*;—*must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun? Young Romilly is divine;[1]

[1] The admirable little poem, entitled "The Force of Prayer," developing the depths of a widowed mother's grief, whose only son has been drowned in attempting to leap over the precipice of the "Wharf" at Bolton Abbey. The first line, printed in old English characters, from some old English ballad,

"What is good for a bootless bene?"

suggests Miss Lamb's single pun. The following are the profoundest stanzas among those which excite her brother's most just admiration:—

"If for a lover the lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death and from the passion of death—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding day,
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope.
And hers is a mother's sorrow."—T.

the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial, in Cordelia, and, by implication, for the fatherly too, in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat, and flattering. What's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good? Apropos—when I first opened upon the just mentioned poem, in a careless tone, I said to Mary, as if putting a riddle, "*What is good for a bootless bene?*" To which, with infinite presence of mind, (as the jest-book has it,) she answered, "a shoeless pea." It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well, in your old preface, between the verses of Dr. Johnson, of the "Man in the Strand," and those from "The Babes in the Wood." I was thinking, whether taking your own glorious lines—

> "And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly,"

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering them to—

> "And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly,"

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression, and poetic feeling, nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life if that poem did not make me feel, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a

spiritual taste of that "White Doe" you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest, i.e.* printed. All things read raw to me in MS.; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is "Peter Bell." But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement, without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly Peter Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who looked over your proof sheets and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

My brother's picture of Milton[1] is very finely painted; that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. Yet though I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it?) querulousness about it; yet, hang it! now I remember better, there is not; it is calm, melancholy, and poetical. *One* of the copies of the poems you sent has precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave

[1] Now in the possession of Mrs. Moxon.—H.

me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading "No thoroughfare!" Robinson's is entire: I wish you would write more criticism about Spenser, &c. I think I could say something about him myself; but, Lord bless me! these "merchants and their spicy drugs," which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I "engross" when I should "pen" a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and getting a knowledge of the face of the globe; and rotting the very firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks! *Vale.*

Yours, dear W., and all yours,

C. LAMB.

LETTER C. August 9th, 1815.

Dear Wordsworth,—We acknowledge with pride the receipt of both your handwritings, and desire to be ever had in kindly remembrance by you both and by Dorothy. Alsager, whom you call Alsinger, (and indeed he is rather *singer* than *sager*, no reflection upon his naturals neither,) is well, and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he, and those of his constitution, keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or, have they any? Or, are they made of packthread? He is proof against

weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way, in a wantonness of provocation; and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself, like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture; tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it; and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone: and I'd venture the roof of my mouth, that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happiness'd friend is picking his crackers, that not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and, having performed them, expect to be picked, (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or have the house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos.

Mr. Burney has been to Calais, and has come a travelled Monsieur. He speaks nothing but the Gallic Idiom. Field is on circuit. So now I believe I have given account of most that you saw at our Cabin.

Have you seen a curious letter in the *Morning Chronicle*, by C. L. [Capell Lofft,] the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus? That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences.

Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wish we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowledging for the share we had enjoyed

of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after-thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are every day in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love. Robinson is on the circuit. Our panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning, almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c. There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*, be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance, methinks, is too confined and strait-laced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend. Why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and through all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me; not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him any thing in return, would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I know he meant a free-will offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome.

You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department; which, if it take place, will produce me more time, *i. e.* my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation, which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had. As you say, how a man can fill three volumes up with an essay on the drama is wonderful; I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject.

Did you ever read "Charron on Wisdom?" or "Patrick's Pilgrim?" If neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl on Job, six folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing warehousekeepers' accounts and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a lord of liberty I shall be! I shall dance and skip, and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow, and throw 'em at rich men's night-caps, and talk blank verse, hoity-toity, and sing—"A clerk I was in London gay," "Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban," like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that alley. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck.

Good bye to you all.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CI. April 9th, 1816.

Dear Wordsworth,—Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and Ode according to your suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain and chain them to my shelves, *more Bodleiano*, and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read but don't read; and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Covent Garden Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, though (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, though it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O'Neil or a Mr. Kean. However, he is going to-day to write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter, which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate, till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature, by instinct, to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chemist's Laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might

as well have sent a *Helluo Librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls! He has done pretty well as yet.

Tell Miss H[utchinson] my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time; God bless him!

Tell Mrs. W. her postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual-graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. "Likelihood," for instance, is thus typified . . . .[1] I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s eyes, as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy, I hear, has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you, and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress, in corresponding lucidness, upon our outward eye-sight!

Mary's love to all; she is quite well.

I am called off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool; but why do I relate this to you, who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of deposits, of interests, of warehouse rent, and contingent fund? Adieu!

C. LAMB.

A longer letter when C. is gone back into the country, relating his success, &c.—*my* judgment of *your* new books, &c., &c.—I am scarce quiet enough while he stays. Yours again, C. L.

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[1] Here is a most inimitable scrawl.—T.

LETTER CII.] 1817.

My dear Miss Wordsworth,—Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure; the sight of your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this Summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage, in volunteering a letter; there is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount, as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so, at last, we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place, that so long had sheltered us, and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle; Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front, and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least; strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window, and listening to the calling up of the carriages, and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place, or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend,

Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount, with all its inhabitants enclosed, were to be transplanted with her, and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden.

I passed through the street lately where Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth lodged; several fine new houses, which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished, and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place. I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey. What a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains! I long to see my friend Pypos.[1] Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs. Gilman; he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them altogether, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms; I missed my old friends and could not be comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton, last Summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book: I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. Morgan, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued

[1] Hartley Coleridge.—F.

her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truants, and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains, and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery: certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks, which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for, like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail; you say you can walk fifteen miles with ease; that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB.

LETTER CIII.] Nov. 21st, 1817.

Dear Miss Wordsworth,—Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out, and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mould, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans, like man-drakes pulled up. We are in the individual spot I like best, in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinoüs, where we are morally sure of the earliest

peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life.

Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favour of a princess dying! C. L.

LETTER CIV.] East-India House, 18th Feb., 1818.

My dear Mrs. Wordsworth,—I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of gourds, cassia, cardamoms, aloes, ginger, or tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections. The reason why I cannot write letters at home, is, that I am never alone. Plato's—(I write to W. W. now)—Plato's double-animal parted never longed more to be reciprocally re-united in the system of its first creation than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that

reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great books, or compare sum with sum, and write "paid" against this, and "unpaid" against t'other, and yet reserve in some corner of my mind "some darling thoughts all my own,"—faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing, or a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face. The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions, (earth's I mean,) or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front; or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney. But there are a set of amateurs of the Belles Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rookhs, &c.—what Coleridge said at the lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use reading can be to them, but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the pyramids will last, before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business, and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures, which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accom-

panies me home, lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door; up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares, and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication; knock at the door, in comes Mr. Hazlitt, or Mr. Martin Burney, or Morgan Demi-gorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone—a process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange; for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine. Wine can mollify stones; then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters—(God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred, a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choking and deadening, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on, if they go before bed-time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner; but if you come, never go! The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often; but every time it comes by surprise, that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth!) and voices all the golden morning; and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company; but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one to myself. I am never C. L., but always C. L. & Co. He who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the

more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself! I forget bed-time, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be a-bed; just close to my bed-room window is the club-room of a public-house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus singers of the two theatres, (it must be *both of them*,) begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who, being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play-houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop, or some cheap composer, arranged for choruses; that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. "That fury being quenched"—the howl I mean—a burden succeeds of shouts and clapping, and knocking of the table. At length overtasked nature drops under it, and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christabel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink!) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke:

> "Every knell, the Baron saith,
> Wakes us up to a world of death"—

or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale, is, that by my central situation I am a little over-companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a cheerful glass; but I mean

merely to give you an idea, between office confinement and after-office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome, and carried away, leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favoured with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect, or I should explain myself, that instead of their return 220 times a year, and the return of W. W., &c., seven times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love, and my poor name, C. LAMB.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H., but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or two since, and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course; but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works, which you could read so much better at leisure yourself. If delivered extempore, I am always in pain, lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern. "Gentlemen," said I, and there I stopped; the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying.

Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more, which never can be realised. Between us there is a great gulf, not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope, as there seemed to be between me and that gentleman concerned in the Stamp Office, that I so strangely recoiled from at Haydon's.[1] I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—accountants' deputy accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather poetical; but as she makes herself manifest by the persons of such beasts, I loathe and detest her as the scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red-letter days, they had done their worst; but I was deceived in the length to which heads of offices, those true liberty-haters, can go. They are the tyrants; not Ferdinand, nor Nero. By a decree passed this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Dear W. W., be thankful for liberty.

LETTER CV.[1] Accountant's Office, 26th April, 1818.

Dear W.,—I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the revise of the poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it, and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the printer not to neglect the correction. I know how such a blunder would "batter at your peace." With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted; called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve. Izaak Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. "Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence" is exquisite. The poems I endeavoured not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some picture gallery I was never at before, and going by to-day by chance, found the door open, and had but five minutes to look about me, peeped in; just such a *chastised* peep I took with my

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[1] This letter is fantastically written beneath a regular official order, the words in italics being printed.

"SIR,—*Please to state the weights and amounts of the following Lots of sold Sale*, 181 for

"*Your obedient Servant*,

CHAS. LAMB."—]

mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing "Christabel," by Lord Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, "Kubla Khan," which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it; but there is an observation, "Never tell thy dreams," and I am almost afraid that "Kubla Khan" is an owl that won't bear day-light. I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young I used to chant with ecstasy "MILD ARCADIANS EVER BLOOMING," till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and I think it better than "Windsor Forest," "Dying Christian's Address," &c. Coleridge has sent his tragedy to D[rury] L[ane] T[heatre], It cannot be acted this season; and by their manner of receiving, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is, at present, under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman, (Killman?) a Highgate apothecary, where he plays at leaving off laud—m. I think his essentials not touched: he is very bad; but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face, when he repeats his verses, hath its ancient glory; an archangel a little damaged. Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind letter? We are not quiet enough; Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but four miles, and the neighbourhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff

and wind of his genius for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the Author of the *Excursion*, I should, in a very little time, lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material!* There is not as much metaphysics in thirty-six of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's "Treatise on the Human Understanding," or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the "Pleasures of Hope," or more natural "Beggar's Petition." I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now, within four lines, I was called off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

N.B.—Nothing said above to the contrary, but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any; but I pay dearer. What amuses others robs me of myself: my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work; it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances. It takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump, from ten to four; but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head aches, and you have had enough. God bless you!

C. LAMB.

LETTER CVI.] 1819.

Dear Wordsworth,—I received a copy of "Peter Bell" a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced; and then the price!—sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* "Peter Bell," but *a* "Peter Bell" which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from the supplementary preface to the "Lyrical Ballads." Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Then there is Rogers! He has been re-writing your Poem of the Strid, and publishing it at the end of his "Human Life." Tie him up to the cart, hangman, while you are about it. Who started the spurious "P. B." I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers, the vile Smiths;[1] but I have heard no name mentioned. "Peter Bell" (not the mock one) is excellent; for its matter I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I would rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. "Hartleap Well" is the tale for me; in matter as good as this; in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add "The Waggoner?"—Have I thanked you, though, yet, for "Peter Bell?" I would not *not have it* for a

[1] Authors of the *Rejected Addresses*.—F.

good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say any thing to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face; and I see him far too seldom to teaze him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house; and when we go to see him he is generally writing, or thinking. He is writing in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock "P. B." had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find something diverting in it, I reached your two books off the shelf, and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed: the two of your last edition, of course, I mean: and in the morning I awoke determining to take down the *Excursion*. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond, and fishing up a dead author, whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary BELLS. There is no Cock for such Peters;——damn 'em! I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. A., I am sure, will value it, and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as any body's, and (God bless him!) any body's as good as his own; for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods, by denying him the very faculty itself of dis-

...mination, have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excited curiosity also; and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you, on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust; but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances; and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again, wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off; and by this means one copy of "my works" served for G. D., and, with a little dusting, was made over to my good friend Dr. G——, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully; my town acquaintance, I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you. My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you, and cause to thrive and burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

Yours truly, CHARLES LAMB.

Mary's love.

LETTER CVII.] June 7th, 1819.

My Dear Wordsworth,—You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all

through; yet "Benjamin" is no common favourite; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it. It is as good as it was in 1806; and it will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it. Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication; but I will not enter into personal themes; else, substituting * * * * * * for Ben, and the Honourable United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, it might seem, by no far-fetched analogy, to point its dim warnings hitherward; but I reject the omen, especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar, (I do not mean to compare myself to *him*,) by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant, (was not he the tyrant of some place? fie on my neglect of history!) I can conceive him by command of Hiero or Perillus set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean panegyric in lines, alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it; it would have been a strait-laced torture to his muse; he would have call'd for the bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, nor the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks. Your couplets, with points, epilogues to Mr. H.'s, &c., might be even benefited by the twy-fount, where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhyme. I think the alteration would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre-existence with two inks. Try another; and Rogers, with his silver

standish, having one ink only, I will bet my "Ode on Tobacco," against the "Pleasures of Memory,"—and "Hope," too, shall put more fervour of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two; he shall do it *stans pede in uno*, as it were.

The "Waggoner" is very ill put up in boards; at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication; but that is a mechanical fault. I re-read the "White Doe of Rylstone;" the title should be always written at length, as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A.; which makes me think, with some other trifles, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of two inks.

Manning had just sent it home, and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it: "I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsworth's poem. I am got into the third canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed.[1] 'Tis broad, noble, poetical, with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the Bible, &c.!" and so he goes on.

I do not know which I like best,—the prologue (the latter part especially) to "P. Bell," or the epilogue to

1 "N.B.—M., from his peregrinations, is twelve or fourteen years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late."

"Benjamin." Yes, I tell stories; I do know I like the last best; and the "Waggoner" altogether is a pleasanter remembrance to me than the "Itinerant." If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so. The sonnets are not all new to me; of those which are new, the ninth I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favour done to me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedic——: I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If, as you say, the "Waggoner," in some sort, came at my call, oh for a potent voice to call forth the "Recluse" from his profound dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge—the world!

Had I three inks, I would invoke him! Talfourd has written a most kind review of J. Woodvil, &c., in the *Champion*. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabb Robinson gives me any dear prints that I happen to admire; and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy; but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not choosing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

C. LAMB.

LETTER CVIII. [Nov. 25th, 1819.]

Dear Miss Wordsworth,—You will think me negligent: but I wanted to see more of Willy before I ventured

to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—*Virgilium tantum vidi*—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart, and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant, nor bookworm; so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bon mots*, but the following are a few:—Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked, that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least; which was a touch of the comparative: but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist, he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question, as to the flux and reflux; which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle, Mary,—who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day,—he sagely replied, "Then it must come to the same thing at last;" which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard; so impossible is it for Nature, in any of her works, to come up to the standard of a child's imagination! The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead; and on particular inquiry, his old friend the ourang-outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another, or none. But again, there was a golden

eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative; for, being at play at tricktrack (a kind of minor billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast!" Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term; a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation; a something where the two ends of the brute matter (ivory), and their human and rather violent personification into men, might meet, as I take it: illustrative of that excellent remark, in a certain preface about imagination, explaining "Like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself!" Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce*. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him; for, being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answered that he did not know!

It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn, or a temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid; nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation, in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly; as in the tricktrack board, where the hits are figured. At first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22; but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25, and 33 again with 16, which approacheth

something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a subsardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion; as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside; and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of the skull, certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of Geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy[1] is a well-mannered child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.

Yours, and yours most sincerely,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CIX.] March 20th, 1822.

My dear Wordsworth,—A letter from you is very grateful; I have not seen a Kendal postmark so long! We are pretty well, save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to every thing, which I think I may date from poor John's loss, and another accident or two at the same time, that have made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths overset one, and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within the last two twelvemonths, and so many parts

[1] Mr. Wordsworth's second son, then a scholar at the Charter-House.—T.

of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other: the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly suited. It won't do for another. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Captain Burney gone! What fun has whist now? What matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you? One never hears any thing, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence. Thus one distributes oneself about; and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, won't serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points, and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A. dies. B. not only loses A.; but all A's part in C. C. loses A's part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeables. I express myself muddily, *capite dolente*. I have a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life, but my practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential clerk-faces always in one's dish. Oh for a few years between the grave and the desk!—they are the same, save that at the latter you are the outside

machine. The foul enchanter ——, ("letters four do form his name"—Busirare is his name in hell,) that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry;—*Otium cum indignitate.* I had thought in a green old age (Oh green thought!) to have retired to Ponder's End, (emblematic name, how beautiful!) in the Ware Road, there to have made up my accounts with Heaven and the company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt; anon stretching, on some fine Izaak Walton morning, to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar; but walking, walking ever till I fairly walked myself off my legs, dying walking! The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing), with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me. *Vide* Lord Palmerston's report of the clerks in the War.Office, (Debates in this morning's *Times*,) by which it appears, in twenty years as many clerks have been coughed and catarrhed out of it into their freer graves. Thank you for asking about the pictures. Milton hangs over my fire-side in Covent Garden, (when I am there,) the rest have been sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off! You have gratified me with liking my meeting with Dodd.[1] For the Malvolio story—the thing is become in verity a sad task, and I eke it out with

[1] See the account of the meeting between Dodd and Jem White, in Elia's Essay "On some of the Old Actors."—T.

any thing. If I could slip out of it I should be happy, but our chief-reputed assistants have forsaken us. The Opium-Eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling; and, in short, I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the booksellers' importunity—the old plea you know of authors, but I believe on my part sincere. Hartley I do not so often see; but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honour him. I send you a frozen epistle, but it is Winter and dead time of the year with me. May heaven keep something like Spring and Summer up with you, strengthen your eyes, and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again, before all are closed.

Yours, with every kind remembrance.

C. L.

I had almost forgot to say, I think you thoroughly right about presentation copies. I should like to see you print a book I should grudge to purchase for its size. Hang me, but I would have it though!

Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacock's for your fair niece's sake.

LETTER CX.] 1822.

Dear Miss Wordsworth,—I had just written the above endearing words when Monkhouse[1] tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pie, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M——, I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tormented with rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcass holds it out. I have played the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy shall be welcome to a mince-pie, and a bout at commerce whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations: every body likes them, except the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*. 'Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews; the Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge, a portrait of Cromwell, at Sydney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red), at Dr. Davy's; you should see them. Coleridge is pretty well. I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week; I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten butcher's meat, as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find Winters not so agreeable as they used to be "when Winter bleak had charms for

[1] Mr. Wordsworth's brother-in-law.—H.

me." I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes. Let them keep to twelfth cakes!

Mrs. Paris, our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the Watfords in Trumpington Street. They are capital people. Ask any body you meet who is the biggest woman in Cambridge, and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith. She broke down two benches in Trinity gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the Societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar, (literally!) and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends tooth-aches. She is to be seen in the market every morning, at ten, cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

Having now answered most of the points contained in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary from not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter?

C. L.

LETTER CXI.] Colebrook Cottage, 6th April, 1825.

Dear Wordsworth,—I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He

and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it. Here am I then, after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety: £441, *i.e.* £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c.

I came home FOR EVER on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i.e.* to have three times as much real time (time that is my own) in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys; their conscious fugitiveness; the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home, in rain or shine, without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery,[1] after their releasements, describe the shock of their emancipation much

[1] James Montgomery, the poet, who was imprisoned for a considerable time on account of having printed the Duke of Richmond's *Letter on the People's Rights to Universal Suffrage*, 1817.—H.

as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep as sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursioned twenty miles; to-day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play-days; mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent!

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamed to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learned to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorbed all interest; in fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions, with whom I have had such merry hours, seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures; but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gilman give me my certificates.[1] I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them; but my sister shook her head, and said it was all true. Indeed, this last Winter I was jaded out: Winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no day-light. In Summer I had day-light evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior Power, when I, poor slave, had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob: and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me!

[1] As to his unfitness for further duty at the East India House.—F.

Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's "Missionary Orations" to S. T. C.? Who shall call this man a quack hereafter? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet, among his own people, "That is a reason for doing it," was his noble answer. That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Dedication shows it.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the "Church," which circumstances, having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you—I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate.

Farewell! and end at last, long selfish letter.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXII.] [1825.]

Dear W.,—I write post-haste to ensure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations. I may now date from the sixth week of my "Hegira, or Flight from Leadenhall." I have lived so much in it, that a Summer seems already past; and 'tis but early May yet with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world! Its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spin-spinners! O the

carking cares! O the money-grubbers! Sempiternal muckworms!

Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont; I think that circumstances made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it?—and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

Coleridge has just finished his prize Essay, [by] which, if it get the prize, he'll touch an additional £100 I fancy. His book, too, ("Commentary on Bishop Leighton,") is quite finished, and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

In the *London Magazine*, which is just out, (1st of May,) are two papers entitled the "Superannuated Man," which I wish you to see; and also, 1st of April, a little thing called "Barbara S———," a story gleaned from Miss Kelly.[1] The *London Magazine*, if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumenæ;* for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs, that I shall miss my THIRDS. But *couragio!* I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was well thrown out; an anchorage for *age* and school of economy, when necessity comes; but without this latter, I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction; else I do sometimes ruralize in fancy.

Some d—d people are come in, and I must finish abruptly. By d—d, I only mean deuced. 'Tis these suitors of Penelope that makes it necessary to *authorize* a little for gin and mutton, and such trifles.

Excuse my abortive scribble.

Yours, not in more haste than heart,

C. L.

Love and recollects to all the Wms., Doras, Marys round your Wrekin.

Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir G. B., for I am shyish of applying to him.

LETTER CXIII. Jan. 22nd, 1830.

And is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a *punctum stans*. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor Winter heightens our gloom; Autumn hath foregone its moralities,—they are "hey-pass repass," as in a show-box. Yet, as far as last year occurs back,—for they scarce show a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore,—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass. Suffice it, that after sad spirits, prolonged through many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins; have taken a farewell of the pompous, troublesome trifle, called housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them; with the garden but to see it grow; with the tax-gatherer but

to hear him knock; with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us, save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how; quietists—confiding ravens. We have *otium pro dignitate*, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self-condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite killed, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleet Market; but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? Intolerable dulness. What by early hours and moderate meals? A total blank. O never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the cheerful haunts of streets, or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers; but to have a little teazing image of a town about one; country folks that do not look like country folks; shops two yards square, half-a-dozen apples, and two penn'orth of overlooked ginger-bread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street; and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the show-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travelled,—(marry, they just begin to be conscious of the *Redgauntlet*:)—to have a new plastered flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a cathedral! The very blackguards here are degenerate; the topping gentry stock-brokers; the passengers too many to insure your quiet, or let you go about whistling or gaping, too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. ··Confining,

room-keeping, thickest Winter, is yet more bearable here than the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle, one is soothed into an oblivion that one is not in the country; but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into St. Giles's. O let no native Londoner imagine that health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet, and recreative study, can make the country any thing better than altogether odious and detestable! A garden was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns,—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions. From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for any thing there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to; any thing high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here; it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it, read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias inclosed in a whiting's liver, to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you, you had knocked your head against something. Do not do so; for your head (I

do not flatter) is not a knob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine pin,—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a "Recluse" out of it; then would I bid the smirched god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. Mary must squeeze out a line *propriâ manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear, that though I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past. She is absolutely three years and a half younger, as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan.

Our providers are an honest pair, Dame W[estwood] and her husband. He, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow bells, retired since with something under a competence; writes himself parcel gentleman; hath borne parish offices; sings fine old sea songs at threescore and ten; sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands, about fifteen, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, "I have married my daughter, however;" takes the weather as it comes; outsides it to town in severest season; and o' winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature, (how comfortable to author-rid folks!) and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a rider in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to balk his employer's bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a mad horse, to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of inn-

keepers, ostlers, &c., who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Derby. Understand, the creature galled to death and desperation by gad-flies, cormorant-winged, worse than beset Inachus's daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a Winter's eve; 'tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence, to descant upon. Far from me be it (*dii avertant*), to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggered all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity; that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy nilly; that needs must when such a devil drove; that certain spiral configurations in the frame of T[homas] W[estwood] unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. But in case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let accident and him share the glory. You would all like Thomas Westwood. How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which, like the sceptre of Agamemnon, shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea; nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favoured in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses—still you have not the man.

[1] Here was a rude sketch of a gentleman, answering the description.—T.

Knew you old Norris of the Temple? sixty years ours and our fathers' friend? He was not more natural to us than this old W., the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner! Well, if we ever do move, we have incumbrances the less to impede us; all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing, like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb[1] is at Rome; advices to that effect have reached Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeathed at parting (whether he should live or die) a turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Christmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old bachelor's action! I fear he will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Harz forest; his soul is be-Goethed. Miss Kelly we never see; Talfourd not this half-year: the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children (God forgive me!) I have utterly forgotten. We single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? We see scarce any body. Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O? Excuse particularizing.

C. L.

LETTER CXIV.] End of May nearly [1833.]

Dear Wordsworth,—Your letter, save in what respects your dear sister's health, cheered me in my

[1] Mr. H. C. Robinson.—F.

new solitude. Mary is ill again. Her illnesses encroach yearly. The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing: nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration,—shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life she is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears and lookings forward to the next shock. With such prospects, it seemed to me necessary that she should no longer live with me, and be fluttered with continual removals; so I am come to live with her, at a Mr. Walden's, and his wife, who take in patients, and have arranged to lodge and board us only. They have had the care of her before. I see little of her: alas! I too often hear her. *Sunt lachrymæ rerum!* and you and I must bear it.

To lay a little more load on it, a circumstance has happened, *cujus pars magna fui*, and which, at another crisis, I should have more rejoiced in. I am about to lose my old and only walk-companion, whose mirthful spirits were the "youth of our house," Emma Isola. I have her here now for a little while, but she is too nervous, properly to be under such a roof, so she will make short visits,—be no more an inmate. With my perfect approval, and more than concurrence, she is to be wedded to Moxon, at the end of August—so "perish the roses and the flowers" —how is it?

Now to the brighter side. I am emancipated from the Westwoods, and I am with attentive people, and younger. I am three or four miles nearer the great city; coaches half-price less, and going always, of which I will avail myself. I have few friends left

there, one or two though, most beloved. But London streets and faces cheer me inexpressibly, though not one known of the latter were remaining.

Thank you for your cordial reception of "Elia." Inter nos, the "Ariadne" is not a darling with me; several incongruous things are in it, but in the composition it served me as illustrative.

I want you in the "Popular Fallacies"[1] to like the "Home that is no home," and "Rising with the lark."

I am feeble, but cheerful in this my genial hot weather. Walked sixteen miles yesterday. I can't read much in summer time.

With my kindest love to all, and prayers for dear Dorothy,

I remain most affectionately yours,

C. LAMB.

At Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton, Middlesex.

Moxon has introduced Emma to Rogers, and he smiles upon the project. I have given E. my MILTON, (will you pardon me?[2]) in part of a *portion*. It hangs famously in his Murray-like shop.

LETTER CXV.] Church Street, Edmonton, February 22, 1834.

Dear Wordsworth,—I write from a house of mourning. The oldest and best friends I have left

[1] A series of articles contributed, under this title, by Lamb, to the *New Monthly Magazine*.—T.

[2] It had been proposed by Lamb that Mr. W. should be the possessor of the portrait if he outlived his friend, and that afterwards it was to be bequeathed to Christ's College, Cambridge.—T.

are in trouble. A branch of them (and they of the best stock of God's creatures, I believe,) is establishing a school at Carlisle; Her name is Louisa Martin; her address, 75, Castle Street, Carlisle; her qualities (and her motives for this exertion) are the most amiable, most upright. For thirty years she has been tried by me, and on her behaviour I would stake my soul. O, if you can recommend her, how would I love you—if I could love you better! Pray, pray, recommend her. She is as good a human creature,—next to my sister, perhaps, the most exemplary female I ever knew. Moxon tells me you would like a letter from me; you shall have one. *This* I cannot mingle up with any nonsense which you usually tolerate from C. Lamb. Need he add loves to wife, sister, and all? Poor Mary is ill again, after a short lucid interval of four or five months. In short, I may call her half dead to me. Good you are to me. Yours with fervour of friendship, for ever. C. L.

If you want references, the Bishop of Carlisle may be one. Louisa's sister (as good as she, she cannot be better, though she tries,) educated the daughters of the late Earl of Carnarvon, and he settled a handsome annuity on her for life. In short, all the family are a sound rock.

LETTER CXVII.]

[Postscript by Charles Lamb to a letter from Mary Lamb to Miss Wordsworth. About 1822.]

Mary has left a little space for me to fill up with nonsense, as the geographers used to cram monsters in the voids of the maps, and call it Terra Incognita. She has told you how she has taken to water like a hungry otter. I too limp after her in lame imitation,[1] but it goes against me a little at first. I have been acquaintance with it now for full four days, and it seems a moon. I am full of cramps, and rheumatisms, and cold internally, so that fire won't warm me; yet I bear all for virtue's sake. Must I then leave you, gin, rum, brandy, aqua-vitæ, pleasant jolly fellows? Hang temperance, and he that first invented it!—some Anti-Noahite. C—— has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his clock has not struck yet; meantime he pours down goblet after goblet, the second to see where the first is gone, the third to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there is another coming, and a fifth to say he is not sure he is the last.

IV.

Correspondence with Thomas Manning.

Letter CXVIII.] Dec. 28th, 1799.

Dear Manning,—Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company with your thousand faces, running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsichord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-sense and quarter-sense, to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy's own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript! not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a Lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry. Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications. But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun,—your *man's* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked

will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too; so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.

By the by, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*.[1] Allowing your objection, (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is in real life often, cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it; I know you read these *practical divines*;)—but allowing your objection, does not the betraying of his father's secret directly spring from pride?—from the pride of wine, and a full heart, and a proud over-stepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and contempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—"as *trust* in *the matter* of *secrets* all *ties* of *blood*, &c., &c., keeping of *promises*, the feeble mind's religion, binding our *morning knowledge* to the performance of what *last night's ignorance* spake"—does he not prate, that "*Great Spirits*" must do more than die for their friend? Does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great? This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct consequence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely

[1] *Pride's Cure*, the original title of *John Woodvil*.—H.

expect to see him,—perhaps he has been at Cambridge.

Need I turn over to blot a fresh clean half-sheet, merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning,

Your sincere friend,
C. LAMB.

LETTER CXIX.] Dec., 1799.

Dear Manning,—The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

Will it be agreeable to you, if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which must else soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have had. I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate, but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

I look forward with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning's friendship, as an earnest of its after gifts.

I should have written before, but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you in my first outset, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

I am, yours most sincerely,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXX.] 1800.

George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Corpernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-past five, in his neat library. The repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcass on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs, and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters, Shenstone, or the like: it would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his* —Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded pia mater. Thou shouldst restore light

to his eyes and him to his friends and the public. Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night; he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. Anderson, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me;* for I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his *Agricultural Magazine.* The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called the "Epigoniad," by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive, seemingly, to what was going on—hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the name of his old friend Homer stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie s works. It was a curious fact, he said, that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it; and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic—and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 8,000 lines! I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure. Pray come on Monday, if you *can,* and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the non-

sense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock; after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode.

LETTER CXXI.] 1800.

Dear Manning,—I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients, (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth,) but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things: have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man, and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow

one; supposing, rationally enough, I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of the BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend,[1] (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely *in rerum naturæ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going, has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone; for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and ——'s brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum . . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn, (his safest address,) Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscription in the blank leaf, running thus "FROM THE AUTHOR," it might save his wits, and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world. N.B.—

[1] Mr. Frend, many years the Actuary of the Rock Insurance Office, in early life the champion of Unitarianism at Cambridge; the object of a great University's displeasure; in short, the "village Hampden" of the day.—T.

Dirty backs, smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise. N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all, he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be

able to *touch* upon them in his book. So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it? But let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B.—It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L.

LETTER CXXII.] 1800.

Dear Manning,—Olivia is a good girl, and if you turn to my letter you will find that this very plea you set up to vindicate Lloyd, I had made use of as a reason why he should never have employed Olivia to make a copy of such a letter!—a letter I could not have sent to my Enemy's B——, if she had thought proper to seek me in the way of marriage. But you see it in one view, I in another. Rest you merry in your opinion! Opinion is a species of property; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets, and some property, properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Corydon and fair Amaryllis, for Charles Lloyd and Mary Hayes, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, "In what cases, and how far, sincerity is a virtue?" I do not mean Truth, a good Olivia-like creature, God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she

is asked why she did so and so; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would his ears into your face, uncalled for. But I despair of doing any thing by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed; nay, it has been known, that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium, without much ambiguity. Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, decent man; nothing very brilliant about him or imposing, as you may suppose; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-jacobin Christians imagine him. I was well pleased to find he has neither horns nor claws; quite a tame creature, I assure you: a middle-sized man, both in stature and in understanding; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

I begin to think you atheists not quite so tall a species! Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the Pandar to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right-hand sign-post, and the goats the left. Stript of its allegory, you must know the sheep are—I, the Apostles, and the martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c. &c. The goats are the atheists, and adulterers, and fornicators, and dumb dogs, and Godwin, and M——g, and that Thyestæan crew! Egad, how my saintship sickens at the idea! You shall have my play and the Fal-

staff's Letters in a day or two. I will write to Ll[oyd] by this day's Post.

Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to Lloyd? for, really, gentlemen ought to explain their virtues upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling*; and believe me, seriously and deeply,

Your well-wisher and friend,

C. L.

LETTER CXXIII.] 1800.

Dear Manning,—I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at Midsummer; by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house and a neighbourhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently; only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable.

Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure.—Farewell.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXXIV.] [1800.]

You masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies,) that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I exprest an apprehension that you were mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech, before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood mare, and goes well: but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. 'Tis true I might have imagined to myself, that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also, and did imagine, that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose moulding and squeezing Landlord Crisp's three-cornered beaver into fantastic experimental forms; or, that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for

Trinity Bogs when my letters came. In short, my genius (which is a short word, now-a-days, for what-a-great-man-am-I!) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruse of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold face that multiplies its oil; and thou, the old cracked pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook! Imbecile recipient of so fat a miracle! I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyrical muse *this century* can justly boast: for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

Please to advert to pages 291 to 296 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*,—

> "But it seems, like the Devil,
> Buried in Cole Harbour,
> Some say she's risen again,
> 'Gone prentice to a barber."

N.B.—I don't charge any thing for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, [John] Stoddart, Esq.[1]

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[1] Mr., afterwards Dr., and eventually Sir John Stoddart was at first a Radical; afterwards, like Coleridge and Southey, went over to the Tories, became editor of the *Times*, and subsequently started the *New Times* in opposition.—H.

N.B. the 2nd.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable. So, you don't think there's a Word's—worth of good poetry in the great L. B.! I daren't put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my back tingles from the northern castigation. I send you the three letters, which I beg you to return along with those former letters (which I hope you are not going to print, by your detention). But don't be in a hurry to send them. When you come to town will do. Apropos of coming to town: Last Sunday was a fortnight, as I was *coming to town* from the Professor's, inspired with new rum, I tumbled down and broke my nose. I drink nothing stronger than malt liquors.

I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tip-toe) over the Thames and Surrey Hills; at the upper end of King's Bench Walks, in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind; for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em) since I have resided in town. Like the country mouse, that had tasted a little of urbane manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self, without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of

enchanting (more than Mahometan paradise) London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastry-cooks, St. Paul's Churchyard, the Strand, Exeter Change, Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! A'nt you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam? Had you not better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal,—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

'Tis half-past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed. Between you and me the L. Ballads are but drowsy performances.

C. LAMB (as you may guess).

LETTER CXXV.] [March 1, 1800.]

I hope by this time you are prepared to say, the "Falstaff's letters" are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you, that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas, that now lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to, with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the

spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private,—I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War, and Nature, and Mr. Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessaries, simple commoners as our fathers knew them, into the upper house of luxuries; bread, and beer, and coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbé Siêyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous than the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading *Burnet's History of his own Times*. Did you ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions, when his "old cap was new." Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives; but all the stark wickedness, that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age, and outlived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually in *alto relievo*. Himself a party man—he makes you a party man. None of the cursed philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold, and unnatural, and inhuman! None of the cursed Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite! None of Dr. Robertson's periods with three members. None of Mr. Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's good old prattle I can bring present to my mind; I

can make the revolution present to me: the French revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To quit this tiresome subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than commonly obtuse letter; dull, up to the dulness of a Dutch commentator on Shakspeare.

My love to Lloyd and to Sophia.[1]

C. L.

LETTER CXXVI.] March 17th, 1800.

Dear Manning,—I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which I hope will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up; what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me, for a first plan, the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton, the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so

[1] Mrs. Lloyd.—H.

dear. If I go on with it, I will apprise you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very thick. I am so taken up with one thing or other, that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you. My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

They are my oldest friends; but, ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings! God bless you all three! I would hear from Ll[oyd] if I could.

Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack: we shall be all too rich.

Tell Charles[1] I have seen his mamma, and have almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete matron-lady-quaker. She has given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and thinner than she was; but I have not time to fall in love.

Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health.

Huzza boys! and down with the Atheists!

LETTER CXVII.] [August 9, 1800.]

Dear Manning,—I suppose you have heard of Sophia Lloyd's good fortune, and paid the customary compliments to the parents. Heaven keep the new-

[1] Charles Lloyd.—H.

born infant from star blasting and moon blasting, from epilepsy, marasmus, and the devil! May he live to see many days, and they good ones; some friends, and they *pretty regular correspondents!* with as much wit and wisdom as will eat their bread and cheese together under a poor roof without quarrelling! as much goodness as will earn heaven. Here I must leave off, my benedictory powers failing me.

And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again?—your fine *dogmatical sceptical* face by punch-light? Oh! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence; yea, of more worth than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility, from Madame Sévigné and Balzac to Sterne and Shenstone.

Coleridge is settled with his wife and the young philosopher at Keswick, with the Wordsworths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary world*. George Dyer too, that good-natured heathen, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse. Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. I find he means to exclude "personal satire," so it appears by his truly original advertisement. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

Now farewell, for dinner is at hand. C. L.

LETTER CXXVIII.] August 11th, 1800.

My dear fellow, (N.B. mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of heaven's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even it can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in "green retreats" all the month of August.

But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aqua-vitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after-dinner trick, I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, mathematically divided, gives 1½ for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

"Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause."
Twenty-first Sonnet.

And elsewhere,—

"What neat repast shall feast us, light[1] and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine,[2] whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?"

Indeed the poets are full of this pleasing morality,—

"Veni cito, Domine Manning!"

Think upon it. Excuse the paper; it is all I have.

C. LAMB.

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[1] "We poets! generally give light dinners."

[2] "No doubt the poet here alludes to Port wine at thirty-eight shillings the dozen."

LETTER CXXIX.] August 22nd, 1800.

Dear Manning,—You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which are just now dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose! For you know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials, which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread-sauce), each to each giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful gold foils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence, (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases,) yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. Anderson, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth; where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bed-room windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstance:

he rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's Æneid, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return postchaise, (having dined with the Doctor,) and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name, of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. "There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir; but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!" This fine genius, without any thing to show for it, or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name; and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these books, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds, (the rightful aborigines of his brain)—Gray, Akenside, and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot! All that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!

Avaunt friendship, and all memory of absent friends! C. LAMB.

LETTER CXXX.] Oct. 5, 1800.

C. L.'s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

Dr. Manning, Coleridge has left us, to go into the North, on a visit to Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the *Morning Post*, all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little sport with such public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Devil, &c.—gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? 'twould have been but giving a polish to lamp-black, not nigrifying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Damn virtue that's thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window and lets out the goose. I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern allusions, which it was my intent only to lug in from time to time to make 'em popular.

Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper.

Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known, else I had done 'em pretty well.

I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being a "Conceit of Diabolic Possession."[1] Burton was a man often assailed by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them to you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. Priscilla meditates going to see *Pizarro* at Drury Lane to-night,[2] (from her uncle's,) under cover of coming to dine with me *...heu tempora! heu mores!*—I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.—Yours as usual

C. L.

LETTER CXXXI.] Oct. 16th, 1800.

Dear Manning,—Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *feverites*. And, with the other prospect before me, you may believe

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[1] Referring to the verses entitled "Hypochondriacus," beginning—"By myself walking."—F.

I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise, with the sincerity of St. Peter, and the contrition of sinner Peter if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Cambridge. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not libraries, halls, colleges, books, pictures, statues? I wish you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*,—a live rattlesnake, ten feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds. Immediately a stranger entered (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open; the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it

frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box; and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his cursed mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of the *Farmer's Boy*. I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models, in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. *All* is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake,

C. L.

LETTER CXXXII.] 1800.

I was not aware that you owed me any thing beside that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live

at No. 16, Mitre Court Buildings, a pistol-shot off Baron Maseres'. You must introduce me to the Baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor, for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story, for the air. He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them. His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the Baron and me together.—N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for 'tis pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will show you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river, so as by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcass with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench Walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room:—casement windows, with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving,—the very bed on which Manning lay; the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! "The very bed which on thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hands of ruffians—" (upholsterers' men,) &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day-guest.

I have been ill more than month, with a bad cold, which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience)

about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugged with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove (tinctura purpuræ digitalis of the ancients). I am afraid I must leave off drinking.

LETTER CXXXIII.] November 3rd, 1800.

Ecquid meditatur Archimedes? What is Euclid doing? What hath happened to learned Trismegist? Doth he take it in ill part, that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come. Are impossibilities nothing?—be they abstractions of the intellect?—or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum* no thoroughfares? *racemi nimium alte pendentes?* Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters, which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis truly curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat.* I wonder it has never been hit on before my time. I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant hand,* one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another. George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of

society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui* may. light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for some body to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable any body. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand; a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes;—himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall,[1] conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and any thing with any body; a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine; reads no poetry but Shakspeare; very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry; relishes George Dyer; thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found; understands the *first time*, (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion; *up* to any thing; *down* to every thing; whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select*, only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You

[1] John Thelwall "Citizen Thelwall," the early friend of Coleridge and Southey.—H.

must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one; a new class; an exotic; any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot; the clearest headed fellow; fullest of matter, with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play,[1] which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that any body had to this day ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable!) request of another copy (if I had one by me), and a promise of a definitive answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand; so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene, (which is too leisurely for story,) and transposing that soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient; and cleared away a good deal besides; and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c. *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling bell and death-warrant.

This is all my London news. Send me some from the *banks of Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially George Dyer, who has no other name nor

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[1] Referring to the "Intruding Widow."—F.

idea nor definition of Cambridge. Its being a market town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition. It was and is simply the banks of the Cam, or the fair Cam, as Oxford is the banks of the Isis, or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist, C. LAMB.

(Read on; there's more at the bottom.)

You ask me about the *Farmer's Boy*. Don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles*, and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick.

Dyer knows the shoemaker, a damn'd stupid hound in company; but George promises to introduce him indiscriminately to all friends.

LETTER CXXXIV.] [Nov. 28th, 1800.]

Dear Manning,—I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia, to go and spend a month with them at the Lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend), that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty

city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes. Consider Grasmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! I hope you will. Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess, a *bite.*

P.S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money* and *time.* I should be loth to think he meant

> "Ironic satire sidelong sklented
> On my poor pursie."—BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature.* The earth, and sea, and sky, (when all is said,) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation, if they can talk sensibly, and feel properly, I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase) nor his five-shilling print, over the mantel-piece, of old Nabbs the carrier, (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world; eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers, (you may know them by their gait,) lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silversmiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling

home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of "Fire!" and "Stop thief!" inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, "Jeremy Taylors," "Burtons on Melancholy," and "Religio Medicis," on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London! with thy many sins. O City, abounding in w . . . . ., for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang! C. L.

LETTER CXXXV.] Dec. 13th, 1800.

I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out; I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an amended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but for Heaven's sake do not mention it: it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The name is *Jack Incident*. It is all about promise-breaking: you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

> Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,
> Purchased a renter's share at Drury Lane.

(Here follows the Epilogue to Godwin's "Antonio.")

About a harmless play why all this fright?
I'll go and see it, if 'tis but for spite—
Zounds, woman! Nelson's to be there to-night."[1]

N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*, except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen or *heard*. Now I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it ('pon honour!) by this day week.

I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you must read the last first; it begins thus:—(The names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play.)

"Ladies, ye've heard how Guzman's consort died,
Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,
When Spanish honour through the world was blown,
And Spanish beauty for the best was known.[2]
In that romantic, unenlighten'd time,
A *breach* of *promise*[3] was a sort of crime:
A whimsical old Saragossa[4] fashion,
That a dead father's dying inclination
Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion.[5]
Unjustly on the sex *we*[6] men exclaim,
Rail at *your*[7] * * vices,—and commit the same.
What need we instance here the lover's vow,
The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow?"

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1 "A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres—and advertised himself."

2 "Four easy lines." 3 "For which the heroine died."

4 "In *Spain!!*" 5 "Two *neat* lines." 6 "Or *you*."

7 "Or *our*, as *they* have altered it." 8 Antithesis!!

Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to hear it recited!!!

C. L.

LETTER CXXXVI.] Dec. 16th, 1800.

We are, damn'd!—Not the facetious epilogue itself could save us; for, as the editor of the *Morning Post* (quick-sighted gentleman!) hath this morning truly observed, (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words;* their profound *sense* I am sure I retain;) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mr. Manning!) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. Professor, thy glories wax dim![1] Again, the incomparable author of the *True Briton* declareth in *his* paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O, Professor, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias acquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago—thy anticipations of thy nine nights—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor

[1] Alluding to the failure of Godwin's Play "Antonio."—F.

while he was out, I was ushered into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. *Imprimis*, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges: I was in the honoured file! Next (a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride) lay a list of all the morning papers, (from the *Morning Chronicle* downwards to the *Porcupine*,) with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play; stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with, and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next (which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride!) lay a list of books which thy untragedy-favoured pocket could never answer: Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare, (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory) that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned;* and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye! pray read him to a little better purpose. Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall) lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy

assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits, (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also a slow); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance, (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids,) and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel; his face was lengthened, and all over perspiration. I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. "From every pore of him a perfume fell." I have seen that man in many situations, and, from my soul, I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper, and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have

since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*. L.

LETTER CXXXVII.] December 27th, 1800.

At length George Dyer's phrenitis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the Heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight. The first symptom which struck my eye, and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth, was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins. Anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window, or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and catched up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Bloomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately: (the most unlucky accident!) he had struck off five hundred impressions of his

Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30, the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian, and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence:—"Sir, 'tis of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled!*"

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian* Travels for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that He must write poetry? *Is morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was council for Archbishop Fenelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee (Deo volente, et diabolo nolente,) on Monday night, the

5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress: Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee upon table, (or any other curious production of Turkey, or both Indies,) snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument;* difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve.—N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese, wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking pig, or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville.[1]

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXXXVIII.] No date. [About 1800.]

Dear Manning,—I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr. Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied having received a letter from you. The one for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall Street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner), my teeth unpicked. There I learned that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first door on the left hand

before one o'clock. I returned and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the Speaker,[1] who will not fail to lay the matter before Parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all abuses in the Post Department rectified.

N.B.—There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct your letters to me in Mitre Court: my true address is Mitre Court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of us her children, there happens to be another Mr. Lamb (that there should be two ! !) in Mitre Court. His duns and girls frequently stumble up to me, and I am obliged to satisfy both in the best way I am able.

Farewell, and think upon it. C. L.

LETTER CXXXIX.] 1801.

Dear Manning,—I have forborne writing so long, (and so have you for the matter of that,) until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect—from illness, or some mishap which may have befallen you, I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may

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1 Rickman was clerk of the House of Commons. Lamb had lately made his acquaintance. He at one time endeavoured, but without success, to procure through Rickman a situation in the House for Martin Burney.—H.

have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson: any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in Saint Mark. For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor *Albion* died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up for ever.

All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism: they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months' interruption.

I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*-man—who has got a place at last—one of the last I *did* for the Albion:—

> "Though thou'rt like Judas, an apostate black,
> In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack:
> When he had gotten his ill-purchased pelf,
> He went away, and wisely hang'd himself:
> This thou mayst do at last; yet much I doubt,
> If thou hast any *bowels* to gush out!"

Yours, as ever, C. LAMB.

LETTER CXL.] [1801.]

My dear Manning,—I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed

minute-hand; (I lie: *that* does not *sit*;) and being myself the exponent of no time, take no heed how the clocks about me are going. You possibly by this time may have explored all Italy, and toppled, unawares, into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell, —while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest post-master of Toulouse. But in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you, that your letter was quite to my palate: in particular your just remarks upon Industry, cursed Industry, (though indeed you left me to explore the reason,) were highly relishing. I have often wished I had lived in the golden age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers, and roused themselves at their leisure,— the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world!

Now, as Joseph Cottle, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

> "How steep! how painful the ascent!
> It needs the evidence of *close deduction*
> To know that ever I shall gain the top."

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very *popular* poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both his drama and epopoiea are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his

enemy has engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and way-lay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims—

"*Twelve*, dost thou say? Curse on those dozen villains!"

Cottle read two or three acts out to us, very gravely on both sides till he came to this heroic touch,—and then he asked what we laughed at? I had no more muscles that day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases.

LETTER CXLI.] Aug. 31, 1801.

I heard that you were going to China,[1] with a commission from the Wedgwoods to collect hints for their pottery, and to teach the Chinese *perspective;* but I did not know that London lay in your way to Pekin. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories: it is a fragment of a "Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century," which will no doubt be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two* and *twenty* readers of the *Albion;* (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil;) but becoming of no use, when the *Albion* stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is to come to

[1] Mr. Manning had begun to be haunted with the idea of China, and to talk of going thither, which he accomplished some years afterwards, without any motive but a desire to see that great nation.

London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

The *Albion* is dead—dead as nail in door—and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of opening to the *Morning Chronicle*, by means of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry, the editor, yet: but I am preparing a specimen. I shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mr. Perry, in common with the great body of the Whigs, thinks the *Albion* very low. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent, and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *N'importe*, (as they say in French,) any climate will suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going what seems to me I can never recover—*a finished man*. His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites,—I shall look up to it, to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him: for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man that could be at all a second or substitute for him in any sort.

Imagine that what is here erased was an apology and explanation, perfectly satisfactory you may be sure for rating this man so highly at the expense of ——, and ——, and ——, and M——, and ——, and ——, and ——. But Mr. Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a Member of the National Assembly, or else in Appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which. Do you remember an instance from Homer, (who understood these matters tolerably well,) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead?

I live where I did, in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple.

C. L.

I send you all of Coleridge's letters[1] to me, which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on "Pride's Cure," by a young physician from EDINBRO', who modestly suggests quite another kind of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful Professor! to conceal his

[1] Lamb afterwards, in some melancholy mood, destroyed all Coleridge's Letters, and was so vexed with what he had done, that he never preserved any letters which he received afterwards.—T.

name even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh monstrous and almost satanical pride!

You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) *in statu quo*, till I come to claim mine own.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXLII.] Feb. 15th, 1802.

Apropos, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right. And the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands where a hodge-podge of German puerilities used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene. I will now transcribe the "Londoner" (No. 1), and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end.

[Here was transcribed the essay called "The Londoner," which was published some years afterwards in the *Reflector*, and which forms part of Lamb's collected works. He then proceeds]:—

"What is all this about?" said Mrs. Shandy. "A story of a cock and a bull," said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water: only I hope he won't *shut* his *eyes*, and *open* his *mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape*, and not to *read*. Manning, continue your laudible purpose of making me your register. I will render you back all your remarks; and *I*, *not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may

the great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishmen from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

Allons—or what is it you say, instead of *good-bye?*

Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXLIII.] 24th Sept. 1802, London.

My dear Manning,—Since the date of my last letter I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly intend never to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year, prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was, a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice, for my time, being precious, did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He

dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c., &c. We thought we had got into fairy-land. But that went off, (as it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets;) and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw, and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons, (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night,) and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater, (where the

Clarksons live,) and a place at the other end of Ulswater; I forget the name;[1] to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill, (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones,) and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned, (I have now been come home near three weeks; I was a month out,) and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand are better places to live in for

[1] Patterdale.—H.

good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think, *i. e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i. e.* the night, glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant! O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard, but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion, (that has been: *nam hic cæstus artemque repono,*) is turned editor of a Naval Chronicle. Godwin continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That . . . . . has detached Marshall from his house; Marshall, the man who went to sleep when the "Ancient Mariner" was reading; the old, steady, unalterable friend of the

Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i. e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted, &c.! I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell. Write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXLIV.] Feb. 19th, 1803.

My dear Manning,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of "Independent Tartary." What are you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John? Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed? Depend upon it they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They will certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Mandeville's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed he is no very favourable specimen of his countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For

this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea* of *oblivion*, ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories,) or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *independence?* That was a clever way of the old puritans, pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar-people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then, conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan, and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there are no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention;* but if there were such darling things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the horse of brass, and frisk off for Prester John's country. But these are all tales; a horse of brass never flew, and a king's daughter never talked with birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchy set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*.) Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they are nothing but lies), only now and then a romance, to keep the fancy *under.* Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts. That has been your ruin.*

Accustom yourself to write familiar letters, on common subjects, to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend Holcroft, now, has written a Play.[1] You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to see it. Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface that they *did* like it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, "Sir, why did you not laugh at my jest?" But for a man boldly to face one out with "Sir, I maintain it, you *did* laugh at my jest," is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honourable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. G——— is dull, then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain,[1] who pleases himself vastly with once having made a pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was *so much of the gentleman*. Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out at fivepence a-pound; to sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland) not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and

[1] Mr. Manning had begnn to be haunted with the idea of China, and to talk of going thither, which he accomplished some years afterwards, without any motive but a desire to see that great nation.—T.

exercise may do great things. Talk with some minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere friend,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXLV.] [1803.]

Not a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his store-keeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and if Trismegistus cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to St. Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder, every morning at ten o'clock, ever since it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches, and the cheerfulness of

shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? Is it as good as hanging? Are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of *both sexes?* Are you and the first consul *thick?* All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure; but are to serve as memoranda and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordising recollection, for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed, and very funny. Every part of it pleased me till you came to Paris; then your philosophical indolence, or indifference, stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil are men nothing but word-trumpets? Are men all tongue and ear? Have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble, no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude nor dissimilitude to English! Why, thou cursed Smellfungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen, (I forget how you spell it, it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time,) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE, (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would.) It appears to me as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one, which he can never know, the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a "stronger man" armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken for known ob-

jects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst to me is, that I have given up two guineas a-week at the *Post*, and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est;* I must cut closer, that's all. Mister Fell, or as you, with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him, Mr. F + ll, has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some *friend* has told him that it has not the least merit in it. Oh that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I would put in a *libera nos* (*Scriptores videlicet*) *ab amicis!* That's all the news. *Apropos:* is it pedantry, writing to a Frenchman, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? Methinks my thoughts fall naturally into it.

In all this time I have done but one thing, which I reckon tolerable, and that I will transcribe, because it may give you pleasure, being a picture of *my* humours. You will find it in my last page. It absurdly is a first Number of a series, thus strangled in embryo.

More news! The Professor's Rib has come out to be a disagreeable woman, so much so as to drive me and some more old cronies from his house. He must not wonder if people are shy of coming to see him because of the "snakes." C. L.

LETTER CXLVI.] [March, 1803.]

Dear Manning,—I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have

heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken to her in my life. She died about a month since. If you have interest with the Abbé de Lisle, you may get 'em translated; he has done as much for the Georgics.[1]

LETTER CXLVII.] [1803.]

My dear Manning,—Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, 'the god-like face of the first consul.' *What god* does he most resemble, Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis, who, flying (as Egpytian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted upon Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a tyranny, &c. Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than I. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your séances and conversaziones, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, bad as ours are, is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *dégagé* than Mr. Caulfield, or Mr. Whit-

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[1] Lamb refers to his pretty little poem called *Hester*, upon the death of Hester Savory, the young Quaker lady.—See *Poems*.

field; but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess?* or can a Frenchman *laugh?* Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loth to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your taste and morals are corrupt and perverted. By and by you will come to assert that Buonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read *Henry the Fifth* to restore your orthodoxy.

All things continue at a stay-still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses, which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor any thing that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Something I will say about people that you and I know. Fenwick is still in debt, and the Professor has not done making love to his new spouse. I think he never looks into an almanack, or he would have found by the calendar that the honeymoon was extinct a moon ago. Southey is Secretary to the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer; £400 a year. Stoddart is turned Doctor of Civil Law, and dwells in Doctors' Commons. I fear *his* commons are short, as they say. Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl who died at nineteen?—a good girl, and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin.

"Under this cold marble stone
Sleep the sad remains of one
Who, when alive, by few or none
Was loved, as loved she might have been,
If she prosperous days had seen,
Or had thriving been, I ween.
Only this cold funeral stone
Tells she was beloved by one,
Who on the marble graves his moan."

Brief, and pretty, and tender, is it not? I send you this, being the only piece of poetry I have *done* since the Muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain, nor paper in my drawer, to write you a longer letter. Liquor and company and wicked tobacco, a'nights, have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you, who spiritualise upon Champagne, may continue to write long letters, and stuff 'em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be, any more than a codicil to a will, which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again. These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St. George.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXLVIII.] 16, Mitre Court Buildings, Saturday, 24th Feb. 1805.

Dear Manning,—I have been very unwell since I saw you: a sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself

into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived, with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that "orders (to wit, for brawn) from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed," &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumpets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, runaway gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the every-day courtesies of dish-washers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—"you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;" so brawn, you must taste it ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the

adept: those that will send out their tongue and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*) compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu. I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp, the barber, of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chestnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair: just to remember him by. Gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens;* that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours, C. LAMB.

LETTER CXLIX.] [July 27th, 1805.]

Dear Archimedes,—Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has shown signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I sha'n't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the West, which promotes tranquillity. Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular; shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of pease with bacon and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me!

Nurse! don't call me unless Mr. Manning comes. —What! the gentleman in spectacles?—Yes.

Dormit. C. L.

Saturday,
Hot Noon.

LETTER CL.] [Nov. 15, 1805.]

Dear Manning,—Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious; pearls of extra-

ordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them; given them in clusters to ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home; so shall we certainly, both, on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one: but choose which evening you will not come, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases.

C. L.

LETTER CLI.] May 10th, 1806.

My dear Manning,—I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, for when you are down the ladder you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then ——. Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you; and at twelve o'clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have stayed so long I shall never be

able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Dawe, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little mandarin for our mantelpiece, as a companion to the child I am going to purchase at the museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspeare's plays, to be made into children's tales. Six are already done by her; to wit, the *Tempest*, the *Winter's Tale*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Cymbeline*. The *Merchant of Venice* is in forwardness. I have done *Othello* and *Macbeth*, and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people, besides money. It is to bring in sixty guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous pagan anthropophagi. Quam homo homini præstat! but then, perhaps, you'll get murdered, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. Oh Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years, you talk of, may be ten, and

you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstances may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I dare say all this is hum! and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

Good bye, C. L.

LETTER CLII.] December 5th, 1806.

Manning, your letter dated Hottentots,[1] August (the what-was-it?) came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China! Canton! Bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty, whether it can go

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1 Manning had at last gone to China.

to-morrow by a ship which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up and this have to wait, for if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran-new news (the latest edition), which, like oranges, will but grow the better for a sea voyage. Oh that you should be so many hemispheres off! —if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastile. There's your friend Tuthill has got away from France; you remember France? and Tuthill?—ten to one but he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprising him of the vessel's sailing. Know then that he has found means to obtain leave from Buonaparte (without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences* as some have done, who never meant to fulfil them,) to come home, and I have seen him here and at Holcroft's. Ar'n't you glad about Tuthill? Now then be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called the *Vindictive Man*, was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part for being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Bannister, but Mrs. J. has not come to terms with the managers; they have had some squabble; and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by the going off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had her part, and Mr. De Camp took his. His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily *Goldfinch*, taken out of the *Road to Ruin*, not only the same character, but the identical *Goldfinch*—the same as *Falstaff* is in

two plays of Shakspeare's. As the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that Holcroft had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the *Road to Ruin*; and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his "That's your sort," "Go it"—such as Lewis is—did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and inanity of the idea stript of his manner. De Camp was hooted, more than hist, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished; so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a w . . . . was another principal character — a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalised as if you were to introduce such a personage to their private tea-tables. Besides, her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, Holcroft took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the play-bill expressed as much, not reckoning one woman, and one w . . . .; and true it was, for Mr. Powell, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. H. Siddons, Mr. Barrymore, &c., &c., to the number of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there was as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce, for a minute or two; and here they all had their ten-minute speeches, and one of them gave the audience a serious account of how he was now a lawyer but had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the

inconveniences of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c.; which first set the audience a gaping; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail; but news is news at Canton. Poor Holcroft I fear will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. From what I can learn he has saved nothing. You and I were hoping one day that he had, but I fear he has nothing but his pictures and books, and a no very flourishing business, and to be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandykes, &c. God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you, that I feel for the weather-beaten author, and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and I hope about to be acted: it is in rehearsal actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret, and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had sent it before you went. Wroughton read it, and was much pleased with it. I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months, then took courage and furbished it up in a day or two and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal part was given to Elliston, who liked it and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent, and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton, (bless his fat face! he is not a bad actor in some things,) to say that I

should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended no reading or rehearsal, made no interest. What a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to modesty to do all things without noise or pomp. I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next, for Wroughton says in his note, it is so forward that if wanted it may come out next week, and a new melodrame is announced for every day till then; and "a new farce is in rehearsal," is put up in the bills. Now you'd like to know the subject. The title is *Mr. H.*, no more. How simple, how taking! A great H. sprawling over the play-bill and attracting eyes at every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich—all the ladies dying for him—all bursting to know who he is; but he goes by no other name than Mr. H.—a curiosity like that of the dames of Strasburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes, I will; but I can't give you an idea how I have done it. I'll just tell you that after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, "Hogsflesh," all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him. That's the idea. How flat it is here—but how whimsical in the farce! And only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is despatched to-morrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after; but all China will ring of it by and by. N.B. (But this is a secret.) The Professor has got a tragedy coming out, with the young Roscius in it, in January next, as we say—January last, it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all

his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written any thing like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars and may never come again? I don't; but your going away, and all about you, is a threadbare topic. I have worn it out with thinking: it has come to me when I have been dull with any thing, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much; but if I had you here in my European garret, we should but talk over such stuff as I have written—so. Those *Tales from Shakspeare* are near coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr. Dawe is turned author; he has been in such a way lately—Dawe, the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's and says nothing; then sighs and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love; but it seems he was only meditating a work,—"The Life of Moreland." The young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday—a new institution. Like other great men I have a public day, cribbage and pipes, with Phillips[2] and noisy Martin.

Good God! what a bit only I've got left! How shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall get £200 from the theatre if *Mr. H.* has a good run, and I hope £100 for the copyright. Nothing if it fails; and there

never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*. How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the great wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall? Is it as big as Old London Wall, by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton? If you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him. May be you'll think I have not said enough of Tuthill and the Holcrofts. Tuthill is a noble fellow, as far as I can judge. The H.'s bear their disappointment pretty well, but indeed they are sadly mortified. Mrs. H. is cast down. It was well, if it were but on this account, that T. is come home. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra in the pit, next the tweedledees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

Come back one day. C. LAMB.

LETTER CLIII.] 26th Feb. 1808.

Dear Missionary,—Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her; and with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet

appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa.* I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence, but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr. Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or it maybe that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggle-ationis viâ fruendæ.* But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men* the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Were you ever in the pillory?—being damned is something like that. A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a-year, to be £120 when her mother dies. He has no settlement except what he can claim from the Parish. *Pauper est tamen, sed amat.* The thing is therefore in abeyance. But there is love a-both sides. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connection of ideas here; how the devil should you?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws. Is Magna Charta then a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good; but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun: he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day.—(Mind, I am not in debt; I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this Summer. The one is a juvenile book—the

Adventures of Ulysses, intended to be an introduction to the reading of *Telemachus!* It is done out of the *Odyssey*, not from the Greek, (I would not mislead you,) nor yet from Pope's *Odyssey*, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The *Shakspeare Tales* suggested the doing of it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller.[1] The other is done for Longman, and is *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakspeare.* Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have "Specimens of Ancient English Poets," "Specimens of Modern English Poets," "Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers," without end. They used to be called "Beauties." You have seen "Beauties of Shakspeare:" so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakspeare. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk, and I am to share the profits after all deductions; *i.e.* a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum, and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes, like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes

[1] It was published for "The Juvenile Library, 14, Skinner Street, Snow Hill," where Godwin carried on business as "E. Baldwin, Esq."—F.

snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and villify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! Heaven be pleased to make the breath stink and teeth rot out of them all therefore: make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cures me of melancholy as David cured Saul: but I don't throw stones at him as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. Oh that you could go to the new opera of *Kais* to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervises, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury Lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons's or Mr. Kemble's acting! and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! Old Serjeant Hill is dead. Mrs. Rickman is in the family way. It is thought that Hazlitt will have children if he marries Miss

Stoddart. I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine, and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft, on being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, replied, "HOOK AND I." Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, *Tekeli*, &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? They are what little boys do up their breeches with. Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood: the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! "The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with." That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the *Adventurer*, and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but would rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French Institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me. Buonaparte has voted 5000 livres to Davy, the great young English Chemist! but it has not arrived. Coleridge has delivered two lectures at the Royal Institution; two more intended, but he did not come. It is thought he has gone sick

upon them. He isn't well, that's certain.[1] Wordsworth is coming to see him. He sits up in a two pair of stairs room at the *Courier* office, and receives visitors . . . .

Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Conlege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion House. He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear that nothing is wanting but the mind. Even Coleridge was a little checked at this hardihood of assertion. Dyer came to me the other evening at 11 o'clock, when there was a large room full of company, which I usually get together on a Wednesday evening, (all great men have public days,) to propose to me to have my face done by a Miss Beetham, (or Betham,) a miniature painter, some relation to Mrs. Beetham the Profilist or Pattern Mangle woman opposite

[1] Coleridge was, in fact, very ill; in a letter to Lamb, dated Feb. 10, 1808, he says "O Charles! I am very, very ill. Vixi."—H.

St. Dunstan's, to put before my book of Extracts. I declined it.

Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite. I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances of you, which we shall bear in our heads while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live: emptiness abounds. But in fulness of affection, we remain yours, C. L.

LETTER CLIV.] Southampton Buildings, 28th March, 1809.

Dear Manning,—I sent you a long letter by the ships which sailed the beginning of last month, accompanied with books, &c. Since I last wrote Holcroft is dead. He died on Thursday last. So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again! Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets: and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you, we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre-Court Buildings. We are at 34, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and

shall be here till about the end of May; then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King if I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word "moving!" Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart: old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul. They'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Were I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 4, Inner Temple Lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare Court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it: thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know at Kensington, being asked a ques-

tion about the progress of the examinations in the House, inquired who Mrs. Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificancy! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs. —— grows every day in disfavour with me. I will be buried with this inscription over me:—"Here lies C. L., the woman-hater:" I mean that hated one woman: for the rest; God bless them! How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

C. LAMB, &c.

LETTER CLV.] Jan. 2nd, 1810.

Dear Manning,—When I last wrote to you I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any even-

ing. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them, but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the —— which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c. rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent cold, with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to "Mrs. Leicester;"[1] the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's. You may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life; I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going

[1] This refers to the "Poetry for Children," a copy of which it now seems impossible to discover. Mr. Pickering of Piccadilly disposed of a single copy some years ago: but this is the only instance I can find of any one having seen the book.—F.

to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour; and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb, of Stamford;[1] 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country; otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent; higher than which is nothing upon earth. Puns I have not made many, (nor punch much,) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday, (Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia,) that I can't jog on. It is New Year here; that is, it was New Year half a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space; and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. The

[1] "Where my family came from. I should choose that, if ever I should have my choice."

Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill, at half-past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters, besides my own three, into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate * * * * * * * * *. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly Numbers, called the *Friend*, which I would send if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before, deters me; and you'll want something new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the Queen on her coronation day.; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

"She's sweet fifteen,
I'm *one year more.*"

Mrs. Bland sang it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's. That glorious singer,

Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel; yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which preponderated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B—— is always to be met with!

> "Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
> And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives."

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show any body the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin. Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language; but the *grey mare is the better horse*.[1] I don't allude to Mrs. [Godwin], but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paronomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. "Ah! sir," said she, "I have seen better days." "So have I, good woman," I replied; but I meant, literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe[2] is made associate of the Royal Academy. By

[1] Godwin published under the *nom de plume* of "Edward Baldwin, Esq." His portion is called "A New Guide to the English Tongue, in A Letter to Mr. W. F. Mylius, Author of the School Dictionary." In the same year, Godwin, under the same pseudonym, published "Outlines of English Grammar, chiefly abridged from Mr. Hazlitt's New and Improved Grammar of the English Language."—H.

[2] He afterwards accepted an offer to go to Russia, where he was very successful.—H.

what law of association I can't guess, Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs. Buffam[1] that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you.

I remain yours ever,

CH. LAMB.

LETTER CLVI.] Dec. 25th, 1815.

Dear old friend and absentee,—This is Christmas Day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the sub-

[1] The landlady at No. 9, Southampton Buildings.—H.

stitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity? 'Tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of "Unto us a child was born," faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery. I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide; my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come; and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed. Your friends have all got old—those you left blooming; myself, (who am one of the few that remember you,) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years: she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance. It was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last, together, we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs.

Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither; and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a ——, or a ——. For aught I see you might almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbrug into a world were few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face. All your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss ——, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness; but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to Nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller, proposing an epic poem on the "Wander-

ings of Cain," in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crips, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington Street, and for aught I know resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely, but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can. C. LAMB.

LETTER CLVII.] Dec. 26th, 1815.

Dear Manning,—Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am

now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy, it sets the brain agoing, but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends then are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing; but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenney[1] never lets her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in, (as the false nuncio asserts,) but to make up spick and span into a bran-new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla![2] Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and

[1] Wife of Mr. James Kenney, the dramatist. She had been previously the fourth wife of Holcroft.—H.

[2] Wife of C. Wordsworth.—H.

sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his eye upon us, and is whetting his feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, "The good man at the hour of death." I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these letters may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long; but it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans! And yet I know, when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fire-side just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's; but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties

cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLVIII.] [May 28th, 1819.]

My dear M.,—I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

"Hail, Mackery End"—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further.[1] The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and mad-man twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature—(who isn't at times?); but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning; and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfœtation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with

[1] See "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire,"—*Essays of Elia*, p. 100—for a charming account of a visit to their cousin in the country with Mr. Barron Field.—T.

his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico, that he had mopped his poor opzy front with, had rendered up its native dye; and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non*sensorium! But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf: the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. *Gold* is well, but proves "uncoined," as the lovers about Wheathamstead would say.

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day, in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holidays in the fields a Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk,—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk, instead of your living trees! But then again, I hate the Joskins. *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins.*

Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man has just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao. C. LAMB.

LETTER CLIX.] No date. About 1825.

My dear M.—You might have come inopportunely a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw T[uthill] yesternight, who has done for me what may

> "To all my nights and days to come,
> Give solely sovran sway and masterdom."

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non*-capacitated, (I cannot write it *in*-) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurration of this to *any body!*

Mary's love. C. LAMB.

V.

Correspondence with the Hazlitts.

Letter CLX. [Nov. 10, 1805.]

Dear Hazlitt,—I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fireside at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun,) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about Rickman's wife; for instance, how tall she is, and that she visits pranked up like a Queen of the May, with green streamers: a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about Monkey,[1] which can't so well be written: how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued, that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace: these, and such like hows, were in my head to tell you; but who can write? Also how Manning is come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy, and seems to have something in his head, which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking.

[1] The daughter of a friend, and whom Lamb exceedingly liked from a child, and always called by this epithet.—T.

O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried through the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of beauty: I have now for ever!—the small head, the long eye,—that sort of peering curve,—the wicked Italian mischief; the stick-at-nothing, Herodias's daughter kind of grace. You understand me? But you disappoint me in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way. For instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. D. has chosen to illustrate the story of Samson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview between the Jewish hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs "which, of a nation armed, contained the strength." I don't remember he *says* black; but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. Dawe, with striking originality of conception, has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's; in curl and quantity, resembling Mrs. Professor's; his limbs rather stout,—about such a man as my brother or Rickman,—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so long as Dubois, the clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact; for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could

draw down a temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British navy.

Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall, (I was prejudiced against him before,) looking just as a hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a great man we had. Nobody is left of any name at all. His secretary died by his side. I imagined him a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's;[1] but I learnt from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H. one day, and agreed to go on the Sunday to tea, but the rain prevented us, and the distance. I have been to apologize, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday. Strange perverseness! I never went while you stayed here; and now I *go to find you!* What other news is there, Mary? What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the comic. "Oh! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the *American Farmer.* I dare say it is not so good as he fancies; but a book's a book." I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow.[2] We sup at 109, Russell Street, this evening.[3] I wish your brother would not drink. 'Tis a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian lady, a Leonardo one, nick-named

[1] Mr. Hume, of Bayswater. He was a friend of Hazlitt's and Lamb's, and a clerk in one of the Government offices.—H.

[2] Of Covent Garden.—H.

[3] Mr. John Hazlitt's house.—H.

the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c. —and questioned about seducing a duke from his wife and the state, makes answer:—

> "Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?
> So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
> For that some melancholic distracted man
> Hath drown'd himself in it."

N.B. I shall expect a line from you, if but a bare line, whenever you write to Russell Street, and a letter often when you do not. I pay no postage; but I will have consideration for you until Parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned Search, and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her love; and Mary especially.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB

LETTER CLXI.] Jan. 15th, 1806.

Dear Hazlitt,—Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again (Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i.e.* in one lunar month from this time; till when, Johnson positively declines giving any answer. I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs. H. was

naming something about a "Life of Fawcett,"[1] to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explained to Manning, when he asked, "*What Fawcett?*" He innocently thought *Fawcett the Player.* But Fawcett the divine is known to many people, albeit unknown to the Chinese inquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, that Phillips[2] is the man. He is perpetually bringing out biographies,—Richardson, Wilks, Foot, Lee Lewis,—without number: little trim things in two easy volumes, price 12*s.* the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography. You might dish up a Fawcettiad in three months, and ask £60 or £80 for it. I should dare say that Phillips would catch at it. I wrote to you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a letter of business at Godwin's request. Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus, which could not be got ready before the funeral.

As for news, Fenwick is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the rules of the Fleet. On the same, or nearly the same day, Fell, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and four children, I suppose, to the parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise Disposer of all things in *us*, whose prudent conduct has hitherto ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest*

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[1] Joseph Fawcett, Esq., one of Hazlitt's earliest friends.—H.

[2] Richard Phillips, publisher, 71, St. Paul's Churchyard.—H.

si sit Prudentia. Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I ——; but maybe I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I do not want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly off for them. When you have the inclination, I shall be very glad to have a letter from you. Your brother and Mrs. H., I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them; but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visitors and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to work quietly its own workings; which you know is as necessary to the human system as sleep. Sleep, too, I can't get for these winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue? Lunacy. But I trust it won't.

Yours, dear H., C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXII.] Feb. 19th, 1806.

Dear H.,—Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in his house; this happened about five weeks ago; it was in the day time, so it did not burn the house down, but it did so much damage that the house must come down, to be repaired. His nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out. Well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer. I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks; but I am confident he will want no goading. Three or four most capital auctions of pictures are adver-

tised: in May, *Wellbore Ellis Agar's*, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says; in March, Sir George Young's in Stratford Place, (where Cosway lives,) and a Mr. Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announced for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdowne's pictures in March; and though inferior to mention, lastly, the Tructhsessian Gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here? T'other night Loftus[1] called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, fast-day. He happened to light upon Mr. Holcroft, wife, and daughter, their first visit at our house. Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin a large Madonna and child from Mrs. H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after *ignes fatui*. He is a clever man. By the by, I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his show cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that show cupboard excels the show things you see in windows—an old woman, (d . . n her name!) but most superlative; he has it to clean—I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw. But for oil pictures!—what has he to do with Madonnas? If the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent Garden pit-door crowd to see her. It isn't his style of beauty, is it? But he will go on painting things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint. Manning is not gone to China, but talks of going this Spring. God forbid! Coleridge not heard of. I am going to leave

[1] Mr. Hazlitt's cousin. The Rev. W. Hazlitt married Miss Loftus, of Wisbeach, and this gentleman was her brother's child.—H.

off smoke. In the meantime I am so smoky with last night's ten pipes, that I must leave off. Mary begs her kind remembrances. Pray write to us. This is no letter; but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

N.B.—Have taken a room at three shillings a-week, to be in between five and eight at night, to avoid my *nocturnal*, alias *knock-eternal*, visitors. The first-fruits of my retirement has been a farce, which goes to manager to-morrow. *Wish my ticket luck.* God bless you; and do write.—Yours, *fumosissimus*,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXIII.] March 15th, 1806.

Dear H.,—I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I booked off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, besides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorized any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking after.

What do you in Shropshire when so many fine

pictures are a-going a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2*s.* 6*d.* Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month; and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Welbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you, perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire Nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday. *Mon Dieu!* Such Claudes! Four Claudes bought for more than £10,000; (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid;) one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colours short of *bonâ fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colourman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music piece by Titian, a thousand-pound picture, five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing—none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed—all leaning separate ways, but so easy—like a flock of some divine shepherd; the colouring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious—as good as Shakspeare's *Twelfth Night, almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgety passions for a week after—more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in a manner *does*, show. I have no room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room

—his study (only that and the library are shown), when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures worth £60,000. What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your dimished heads!

Yours, my dear painter,

C. LAMB.

Mr. Wm. Hazlitt,
Wem, Shropshire.
In his absence, to be opened immediately.

LETTER CLXIV.] 11th Dec., [1806.]

TO MRS. HAZLITT.

Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c.

God bless you.

Dear Sarah,—Mary is a little cut at the ill success of *Mr. H.*, which came out last night and *failed*. I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of *Mr. H.* for fear of ill luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

God bless you, dear Sarah,

Yours most truly, C. L.

Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write.

LETTER CLXV.] [No date; about 1801.]

My dear Miss Stoddart,[1]—Mary has written so fully to you that I have nothing to add but that in all the kindness she has exprest, and loving desire to see you again, I bear my full part. You will perhaps like to tear this half from the sheet, and give your brother only his strict due, the remainder. So I will just repay your late kind letter with this short postscript[2] to hers. Come over here, and let us all be merry again.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXVI.] Temple, 18th February, 1808.

Sir,—I am truly concerned, that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward some linen to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Wilts, (not far from Salisbury,) where the lady[3] lives, whose cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen; and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both painter and author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in

[1] Miss Stoddart was now staying with her brother at Malta.—H.

[2] This is a postscript to a long letter from Miss Lamb to Miss Stoddart.—H.

[3] Miss Stoddart, afterwards Mrs. Hazlitt.—H.

town, as to the real place of his destination. And some words at the back of the said cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

The letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health,

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

CH. LAMB.

Rev. W. Hazlitt, Wem, Shropshire.

LETTER CLXVII.] Saturday, Dec. 10th, 1808.

There came this morning a printed Prospectus from "S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere," of a Weekly Paper, to be called *The Friend;* a flaming Prospectus. I have no time to give the heads of it. To commence the first Saturday in January. There came also notice of a turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy.

C. LAMB.[1]

Mrs. Hazlitt, Winterslow, near Sarum, Wilts.

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[1] This is a postscript to a letter of Mary Lamb's.—F.

LETTER CLXIX.] [August 9th, 1810].

Dear H.,—Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well, (I was very ill on the journey,) and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys, with two experiences against it. I found all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah,—have just got her letter.

H. Robinson has been to Blenheim. He says you will be sorry to hear that we should not have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Ledas, Mars and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show them to females. But he says they are very fine; and perhaps they are shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Thursday.

Mr. Hazlitt, Winterslow, near Salisbury.

LETTER CLXX.]

Dear Hazlitt,—I sent you on Saturday a Cobbett, containing your reply to the *Edinburgh Review*,

which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr. Cobbett to insert it so speedily. Did you get it? We have received your pig, and return you thanks; it will be dressed in due form, with appropriate sauce, this day. Mary has been very ill indeed since you saw her; that is, as ill as she can be to remain at home. But she is a good deal better now, owing to a very careful regimen. She drinks nothing but water, and never goes out; she does not even go to the Captain's.[1] Her indisposition has been ever since that night you left town; the night Miss W[ordsworth] came. Her coming, and that d——d Mrs. Godwin coming and staying so late that night, so overset her that she lay broad awake all that night, and it was by a miracle that she escaped a very bad illness, which I thoroughly expected. I have made up my mind that she shall never have any one in the house again with her, and that no one shall sleep with her, not even for a night; for it is a very serious thing to be always living with a kind of fever upon her; and therefore I am sure you will take it in good part if I say that if Mrs. Hazlitt comes to town at any time, however glad we shall be to see her in the day-time, I cannot ask her to spend a night under our roof. Some decision we must come to, for the harassing fever that we have both been in, owing to Miss Wordsworth's coming, is not to be borne; and I would rather be dead than so alive. However, at present, owing to a regimen and medicines which Tuthill has given her, who very kindly volunteer'd the care of her, she is a great deal quieter, though too much harassed by company, who cannot or will not see how late hours and society teaze her.

Poor Phillips had the cup dash'd out of his lips as it were. He had every prospect of the situation, when about ten days since one of the council of the R—— Society started for the place himself, being a rich merchant who lately failed, and he will certainly be elected on Friday next. P. is very sore and miserable about it.

Coleridge is in town, or at least at Hammersmith. He is writing or going to write in the *Courier* against Cobbett, and in favour of paper money.

No news. Remember me kindly to Sarah. I write from the office.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Wednesday, 28th Nov. 1810.

I just open'd it to say the pig, upon proof, hath turned out as good as I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odour. I find you have received the Cobbett. I think your paper complete.

Mrs. Reynolds, who is a sage woman, approves of he pig.

Mr. Hazlitt,

Winterslow, near Salisbury, Wilts.

LETTER CLXXI.] 2nd Oct. 1811.[1]

Dear Hazlitt,—I cannot help accompanying my sister's congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born.[2]

Delighted fancy already sees him some future

rich alderman or opulent merchant, painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours, for amusement, like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

Pray, are the Winterslow estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog when he grows up should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem estate of course can only devolve on him in case of your brother's[1] leaving no male issue.

Well; my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper, and a smoother head of hair; and then all the men and women must love him.

Martin and the card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within candle-shot.

C. LAMB.

If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

Mr. Hazlitt, Winterslow,
near Sarum, Wilts.

LETTER CLXXII.] 27th August.

Dear Knight, Old Acquaintance,—'Tis with a violence to the *pure imagination* (*vide* the "Excursion" *passim*) that I can bring myself to believe I am writing to Dr. Stoddart once again at Malta; but the deductions of severe reason warrant the proceeding. I wrote from Enfield, where we are seriously weighing the advantages of dulness over the over-excitement

[1] Sir John Stoddart.—H.

of too much company, but have not yet come to a conclusion. What is the news? for we see no paper here; perhaps you can send us an old one from Malta. Only I heard a butcher in the market-place whisper something about a change of ministry. I don't know who's in or out, nor do I care, only as it might affect *you*. For domestic tidings, I have only to tell you with extreme regret that poor Eliza Fenwick (that was), Mrs. Rutherford, is dead, and that we have received a most heart-broken letter from her mother, left with four grandchildren, orphans of a living scoundrel, lurking about the pot-houses of Little Russell Street, London: they and she (God help 'em!) at New York. I have just received Godwin's 3rd volume of the *Republic*, which only reaches to the commencement of the Protectorate. I think he means to spin it out to his life's thread.

Have you seen Fearn's *Anti-Tooke?* I am no judge of such things; you are; but I think it very clever indeed. If I knew your bookseller, I'd order it for you at a venture; 2 octavos, Longman & Co. Or *do* you read now? Tell it not in the Admiralty Court, but my head aches *hesterno vino*. I can scarce pump up words, much less ideas, congruous to be sent so far, but your son must have this by to-night's post. I am sorry to say that he does not conduct himself so well as we could wish. He absented himself four days this week (this is Thursday) from the Charter House, and was found tippling at an obscure public-house at Barnet with a chorus singer of the Coburg Theatre. Mr. Hine and I with difficulty got him away: but Dr. Raine, the head master, hushed it up with a slight imposition, viz. the translation of Gray's Elegy into Greek Elegiacs, which I partly

did for him. I write this with reluctance to offend the feelings of a father; I might a' been one, if * * * * * had let me. Manning is gone to Rome, Naples, &c., probably to touch at Sicily, Malta, Guernsey, &c.; but I don't know the map. Hazlitt is resident at Paris, whence he issues his lampoons in safety at his friends in England. He has his boy with him. I am teaching Emma Latin. By the time you can answer this, she will be qualified to instruct young ladies. She is a capital English reader, and S. T. C. acknowledges that part of a passage in Milton she read better than he, and part he read best: her part being the shortest. But seriously, if Lady St[oddart] (oblivious pen, that was about to write *Mrs.*) could hear of such a young person wanted, (she smatters French, some Italian, music, of course,) we'd send our loves by her. My congratulations and assurance of old esteem.

C. L.

Sir J. Stoddart. Knight,
H. M. Chief Justice,
Malta.

LETTER CLXXIII.] [November, 1823.]

Dear Mrs. H.,—Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock,

(*bright noonday*,) on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out, from her kitchen window, but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out they can hardly tell, but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. "Send for the Doctor," they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public house at the end, where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water practice; having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at 4 to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed, with the brandy and water which the doctor had administered. He sang, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sober, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouth'd about having paling before the river; but I cannot see, that because a lunatic chooses to walk into a river with his eyes open at mid day, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

I had the honour of dining at the Mansion House on Thursday last by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his; and all from being a writer in a magazine. The dinner

costly, served on massy plate; champagne, pines, &c.; 47 present, among whom the Chairman and two other directors of the India Company.

There's for you! and got away pretty sober. Quite saved my credit.

We continue to like our house prodigiously.

Does Mary Hazlitt[1] go on with her novel? or has she begun another? I would not discourage her, though we continue to think it (so far) in its present state not saleable. Our kind remembrances to her and hers, and you and yours.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureat.

Mrs. Hazlitt,
Alphington, near Exeter.

LETTER CLXXIV.] [March 4, 1830.]

Dear Sarah,—I was meditating to come and see you, but I am unable for the walk. We are both very unwell, and under affliction for poor Emma, who has had a very dangerous brain fever, and is lying very ill at Bury, from whence I expect a summons to fetch her. We are very sorry for your confinement. Any books I have are at your service. I am almost, I may say *quite* sure, that letters to India pay no postage, and may go by the regular Post Office, now in St. Martin' les Grand. I think any receiving house would take them. I wish I could confirm your hopes about Dick Norris. But it is quite a dream,

[1] The second daughter of Mr. John Hazlitt.—H.

Some old Bencher of his surname is made *Treasurer* for the year, I suppose, which is an annual office. Norris was Sub-Treasurer, quite a different thing. They were pretty well in the Summer; since when we have heard nothing of them.

Mrs. Reynolds is better than she has been for years. She is with a disagreeable woman that she has taken a mighty fancy to, out of spite to a rival woman she used to live and quarrel with. She grows quite *fat*, they tell me, and may live as long as I do, to be a tormenting rent-charge to my diminished income.[1] We go on pretty comfortably in our new place. I will come and have a talk with you when poor Emma's affair is settled, and will bring books. At present I am weak, and could hardly bring my legs home yesterday after a much shorter stroll than to Northaw. Mary has got her bonnet on for a short expedition. May you get better, as the Spring comes on. She sends her best love

With mine, C. L.

Mrs. Hazlitt,
Mrs. Tomlinson's,
Northaw, near Potter's Bar, Herts.

LETTER CLXXV.] May 24th, 1830.

Mary's love? Yes. Mary Lamb is quite well.

Enfield, Saturday.

Dear Sarah,—I found my way to Northaw on Thursday, and saw a very good woman behind a counter, who says also that you are a very good lady.

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[1] Lamb allowed Mrs. Reynolds a pension of small amount.—H.

I did not accept her offered glass of wine, (home-made, I take it,) but craved a cup of ale, with which I seasoned a slice of cold lamb, from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlour, and proceeded for Berkhampstead, &c.; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis! I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came; and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner, and said, "Now, pray, don't *drink;* do check yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it." How I behaved, you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and she hoped that she should have "no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence." Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield.[1] We travelled with one of those troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage coach, that is called a well-inform'd man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriage by ditto, till all my

[1] This little anecdote is told by Lamb in another letter, but not quite so richly as here.—T.

science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me: "What sort of a crop of turnips do you think we shall have this year?" Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have o say; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that "it depends, I believe, upon boiled legs of mutton." This clenched our conversation; and my gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of our journey. Ayrton was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit and a devilish pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom. He talked on music, and by having read Hawkins and Burney recently, I was enabled to talk of names, and show more knowledge than he had suspected I possessed; and in the end he begged me to shape my thoughts upon paper, which I did after he was gone, and sent him

FREE THOUGHTS ON SOME EMINENT COMPOSERS.

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites. For my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel, &c.[1]

Martin Burney[2] is as good and as odd as ever.

[1] See the Poetical pieces.

[2] A very old and dear friend of Lamb's, who had just been called to the Bar.—T.

We had a dispute about the word "heir," which I contended was pronounced like "air." He said that might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the "Heir at Law," a comedy; but that in the law courts it was necessary to give it a full aspiration, and to say *Hayer;* he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he "would consult Serjeant Wilde;" who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water; sometimes into the fire. He came down here, and insisted on reading Virgil's "Eneid" all through with me, (which he did,) because a Counsel must know Latin. Another time he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because Biblical quotations are very emphatic in a Court of Justice. A third time he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favouredly, because "we did not know how indispensable it was for a barrister to do all those things well? Those little things were of more consequence than we supposed." So he goes on, harassing about the way to prosperity, and losing it; with a long head, but somewhat a wrong one—harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one: may be he has tired him out.

I am tired with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile you might like a letter. Commend me to all the wonders in Derbyshire; and tell the devil I humbly kiss my—hand to him.

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

London, May 24th, 1830.

Mrs. Hazlitt,
Mr. Broomhead's,
St. Anne's Square, Buxton.

LETTER CLXXVI.] June 3, 1830.

Dear Sarah,—I named your thought about William[1] to his father, who expressed such horror and aversion to the idea of his singing in public, that I cannot meddle in it directly or indirectly. Ayrton is a kind fellow; and if you chuse to consult him by letter, or otherwise, he will give you the best advice, I am sure, very readily. *I have no doubt that M. Burney's objection to interfering was the same with mine.* With thanks for your pleasant long letter, which is not that of an invalid, and sympathy for your sad sufferings,

I remain, in haste,

Yours truly,

Mary's kindest love. [NO SIGNATURE.]

Mrs. Hazlitt, at Mr. Broomhead's,
St. Anne's Square, Buxton.

LETTER CLXXVII.] May 31st, 1833.

Dear Mrs. Hazlitt,—I will assuredly come and find you out when I am better. I am driven from house to house by Mary's illness. I took a sudden resolution to take my sister to Edmonton, where she was under medical treatment last time, and have arranged to board and lodge with the people. Thank God, I have repudiated Enfield. I have got out of hell, despair of heaven, and must sit down contented in a half-way purgatory. Thus ends this strange eventful history. But I am nearer town, and will get up to you somehow before long.

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[1] A suggestion of Mrs. Hazlitt's that her son should be placed with Braham, the singer.—H.

I repent not of my resolution. 'Tis late, and my hand is unsteady; so good bye till we meet,

Your old C. L.

Mr. Walden's,
Church Street, Edmonton.
Mrs. Hazlitt, No. 4, Palace Street, Pimlico.

LETTER CLXXVIII.] [1833.]

My dear William,—I am very uncomfortable, and when Emma leaves me I shall wish to be quite alone; therefore pray tell your mother I regret that I cannot see her here this time, but I hope to see her when times are better with me. The young ladies are very pleasant, but my spirits have much ado to keep pace with theirs. I decidedly wish to be alone, or I know of none I should rather see than your mother. Make my best excuse. Emma will explain to you the state of my wretched spirits.

Yours, C. LAMB.

When I am wretched, company makes me tenfold more so.

Mr. Wm. Hazlitt, jun.,
36, Southampton Buildings, Holborn;
Or at the Southampton Arms.

VI.

Correspondence with Bernard Barton.

Letter CLXXIX.] India House, 11th Sept. 1822.

Dear Sir,—You have misapprehended me sadly, if you suppose that I meant to impute any inconsistency in your writing poetry with your religious profession. I do not remember what I said, but it was spoken sportively, I am sure—one of my levities, which you are not so used to as my older friends. I probably was thinking of the light in which your so indulging yourself would appear to Quakers, and put their objection in my own foolish mouth. I would eat my words (provided they should be written on not very coarse paper) rather than I would throw cold water upon your, and my once, harmless occupation.

I have read "Napoleon" and the rest with delight. I like them for what they are, and for what they are not. I have sickened on the modern rhodomontade and Byronism, and your plain Quakerish beauty has captivated me. It is all wholesome cates; ay, and toothsome too; and withal Quakerish. If I were George Fox, and George Fox licenser of the press, they should have my absolute *imprimatur*. I hope I have removed the impression.

I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that galley thirty years,—a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood. If no imaginative

poet, I am sure I am a figurative one. Do "Friends" allow puns? *verbal* equivocations? They are unjustly accused of it; and I did my little best in the "Imperfect Sympathies" to vindicate them. I am very tired of clerking it, but have no remedy. Did you see a Sonnet to this purpose in the *Examiner*?—

> "*Who* first invented work, and bound the free
> And holy-day rejoicing spirit down
> To the ever-haunting importunity
> Of business, in the green fields and the town,
> To plough, loom, anvil, spade; and oh, most sad,
> To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
> Who but the being unblest, alien from good,
> Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
> Task ever plies, 'mid rotatory burnings,
> That round and round incalculably reel;
> For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel
> In that red realm from which are no returnings;
> Where, toiling and turmoiling, ever and aye,
> He and his thoughts keep pensive working-day."

I fancy the sentiment exprest above will be nearly your own. The expression of it probably would not so well suit with a follower of John Woolman. But I do not know whether diabolism is a part of your creed, or where indeed to find an exposition of your creed at all. In feelings and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker. Believe me, with great respect, yours, C. LAMB.

I shall always be happy to see or hear from you.

LETTER CLXXX.] East India House, 9th Oct., 1822.

Dear Sir,—I am ashamed not sooner to have acknowledged your letter and poem. I think the latter very temperate, very serious, and very seasonable. I

do not think it will convert the club at Pisa, neither do I think it will satisfy the bigots on our side the water. Something like a parody on the song of Ariel would please them better :—

> "Full fathom five the Atheist lies,
> Of his bones are hell-dice made."

I want time, or fancy, to fill up the rest. I sincerely sympathize with you on your doleful confinement. Of time, health, and riches, the first in order is not last in excellence. Riches are chiefly good because they give us Time. What a weight of wearisome prison hours have I to look back and forward to, as quite cut out of life! and the sting of the thing is, that for six hours every day I have no business which I could not contract into two, if they would let me work task-work. I shall be glad to hear that your grievance is mitigated. Shelley I saw once. His voice was the most obnoxious squeak I ever was tormented with, ten thousand times worse than the Laureat's, whose voice is the worst part about him, except his Laureat-ship. Lord Byron opens upon him on Monday in a parody (I suppose) of the *Vision of Judgment*, in which latter the Poet I think did not much show *his*. To award his Heaven and his Hell in the presumptuous manner he has done, was a piece of immodesty as bad as Shelleyism.

I am returning a poor letter. I was formerly a great scribbler in that way, but my hand is out of order. If I said my head too, I should not be very much out, but I will tell no tales of myself; I will therefore end, (after my best thanks, with a hope to see you again some time in London,) begging you to accept this letteret for a letter—a leveret makes a better

present than a grown hare, and short troubles (as the old excuse goes) are best.

I hear that Lloyd[1] is well, and has returned to his family. I think this will give you pleasure to hear.

I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXXXI.] Dec. 23rd, 1822.

Dear Sir,—I have been so distracted with business and one thing or other, I have not had a quiet quarter of an hour for epistolary purposes. Christmas, too, is come, which always puts a rattle into my morning skull. It is a visiting, unquiet, unquakerish season. I get more and more in love with solitude, and proportionately hampered with company. I hope you have some holidays at this period. I have one day—Christmas Day; alas! too few to commemorate the season. All work and no play dulls me. Company is not play, but many times hard work. To play, is for a man to do what he pleases, or to do nothing—to go about soothing his particular fancies. I have lived to a time of life to have outlived the good hours, the nine o'clock suppers, with a bright hour or two to clear up in afterwards. Now you cannot get tea before that hour, and then sit gaping, music-bothered perhaps, till half-past twelve brings up the tray; and

[1] Charles Lloyd, who married one of the Misses Fricker, Mrs. Southey's sister. There were three Misses Fricker, milliners at Bristol, one of whom married Lovell, the "Panfisocratist," the second Lloyd, and a third, Southey.—F.

what you steal of convivial enjoyment after, is heavily paid for in the disquiet of to-morrow's head.

I am pleased with your liking *John Woodvil*, and amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Groat's have you missed traversing! I could almost envy you to have so much to read. I feel as if I had read all the books I want to read. O to forget Fielding, Steele, &c., and read 'em new!

Can you tell me a likely place where I could pick up, cheap, Fox's Journal? There are no Quaker circulating libraries? Elwood, too, I must have. I rather grudge that S[outhe]y has taken up the history of your people: I am afraid he will put in some levity. I am afraid I am not quite exempt from that fault in certain magazine articles, where I have introduced mention of them. Were they to do again, I would reform them. Why should not you write a poetical account of your old worthies, deducing them from Fox to Woolman? But I remember you did talk of something of that kind, as a counterpart to the "Ecclesiastical Sketches." But would not a poem be more consecutive than a string of sonnets? You have no martyrs *quite to the fire*, I think, among you; but plenty of heroic confessors, spirit-martyrs, lamblions. Think of it; it would be better than a series of sonnets on "Eminent Bankers." I like a hit at our way of life, though it does well for me, better than any thing short of *all one's time to one's self;* for which alone I rankle with envy at the rich. Books are good, and pictures are good, and money to buy them therefore good; but to buy *time!* in other words, life!

The "compliments of the time" to you should end my letter; to a Friend, I suppose, I must say the "sincerity of the season;" I hope they both mean the same. With excuses for this hastily-penned note, believe me, with great respect,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXXXII.] January 9th, 1823.

"Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you!!!"

Throw yourself rather, my dear sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors want for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a counting house, all agreeing they would rather have been tailors, weavers,—what not, rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. Oh, you know not (may you never know!) the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine; but a

slavery, worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious task-work. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit, (a jeweller or silversmith for instance,) and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the back-ground,—in *our* work the world gives all the credit to us, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches! I contend that a bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. B[————][1] who first engaged me as "Elia," has not paid me up yet, (nor any of us without repeated mortifying appeals,) yet how the knave fawned when I was of service to him! Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, &c.

Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public; you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for any thing that worthy *personage* cares. I bless every star that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking-office. What! is there not from six to eleven *p.m.* six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could think so!—enough for relaxation, mirth, converse,

[1] Mr. Robert Baldwin, the publisher, afterwards in partnership with Mr. Cradock and Mr. Joy.—H.

poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. Oh the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts, that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight who must draw upon it for daily sustenance! Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment; look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome dead timber of a desk, that makes me live. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen; but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it *six weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's ear. You will much oblige me by this kindness.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXXXIII.] February 17th, 1823.

My dear Sir,—I have read quite through the ponderous folio of George Fox. I think Sewell has been judicious in omitting certain parts, as for instance where G. F. *has* revealed to him the natures of all the creatures in their names, as Adam had. He luckily turns aside from that compendious study of natural history, which might have superseded Buffon, to his proper spiritual pursuits, only just hinting what a philosopher he might have been. The ominous passage is near the beginning of the book. It is clear he means a physical knowledge, without trope or figure. Also, pretences to miraculous healing, and the like, are more frequent than I should have suspected from the epitome in Sewell. He is nevertheless a great spiritual man, and I feel very much obliged by your procuring me the loan of it.

How I like the Quaker phrases!—though I think they were hardly completed till Woolman. A pretty little manual of Quaker language (with an endeavour to explain them) might be gathered out of his book. Could not you do it? I have read through G. F. without finding any explanation of the term *first volume* in the title-page. It takes in all, both his life and his death. Are there more last words of him? Pray how may I return it to Mr. Sewell at Ipswich? I fear to send such a treasure by a stage coach; not that I am afraid of the coachman or the guard's *reading it;* but it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it in safety? The kind-hearted owner trusted it to me for six months; I think I was about as many days in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipped a word of it. I have quoted G. F. in my "Quakers' Meeting," as having said he was "lifted up in spirit," (which I felt at the time to be not a Quaker phrase,) "and the judge and jury were as dead men under his feet." I find no such words in his journal, and I did not get them from Sewell, and the latter sentence I am sure I did not mean to invent: I must have put some other Quaker's words into his mouth. Is it a fatality in me, that every thing I touch turns into "a lie?" I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a book as proof of the stupendous power of that poet; but no such lines are to be found in the translation, which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a lying memory! Yes, I have seen Miss Coleridge, and wish I had just such a daughter. God love her!

To think she should have had to toil through five octavos of that cussed (I forget I write to a Quaker) Abbeypony History, and then to abridge them to three, and all for £113 l[1]—at her years to be doing stupid Jesuits' Latin into English, when she should be reading or writing romances! Heaven send her uncle do not breed her up a Quarterly Reviewer! which reminds me that he has spoken very respectfully of you in the last Number, which is the next thing to having a Review all to one's self. Your description of Mr. Mitford's place makes me long for a pippin and some caraways, and a cup of sack in his orchard, when the sweets of the night come in.

Farewell, C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXXXIV.] March 5th, 1823.

Dear Sir,—You must think me ill-mannered not to have replied to your first letter sooner, but I have an ugly habit of aversion from letter writing, which makes me an unworthy correspondent. I have had no spring, or cordial call to the occupation of late. I have been not well lately, which must be my lame excuse. Your Poem, which I consider very affecting, found me engaged about a humorous Paper for the *London*, which I had called "A Letter to an *Old Gentleman* whose education had been neglected"—

[1] Sara Coleridge's work, to which Lamb refers, was entitled "An Account of the Abipones, from the Latin of Martin Dobrizhoffer," 1822, 3 vols. 8vo. It was edited by Southey. The Abipones are a warlike tribe of Indians, inhabiting the country along the banks of La Plata.—H.

and when it was done Taylor and Hessey would not print it, and it discouraged me from doing any thing else; so I took up Scott,[1] where I had scribbled some petulant remarks, and for a make-shift father'd them on Ritson. It is obvious I could not make your Poem a part of them; and as I did not know whether I should ever be able to do to my mind what you suggested, I thought it not fair to keep back the verses for the chance. Mr. Mitford's Sonnet I like very well; but as I also have my reasons against interfering at all with the Editorial arrangement of the *London*, I transmitted it (not in my own handwriting) to them, who I doubt not will be glad to insert it. What eventual benefit it can be to you (otherwise than that a kind man's wish is a benefit) I cannot conjecture. Your Society are eminently men of business, and will probably regard you as an idle fellow, possibly disown you; that is to say, if you had put your own name to a Sonnet of that sort; but they cannot excommunicate Mr. Mitford; therefore I thoroughly approve of printing the said verses. When I see any Quaker names to the Concert of Ancient Music, or as Directors of the British Institution, or bequeathing medals to Oxford for the best classical themes, &c., then I shall begin to hope they will emancipate you. But what as a Society can they do for you? You would not accept a commission in the army, nor they be likely to procure it. Posts in Church or State have they none in their giving; and then, if they disown you,—think—you must live "a man forbid."

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[1] Scott's Critical Essays on some of the Poems of several English Poets.—H.

I wished for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus, with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore,—half the poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloucester Place! It was a delightful evening. Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk—had all the talk; and let 'em talk as evilly as they do of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses were dumb while Apollo lectured on his and their fine art. It is a lie that poets are envious. I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each other their merits, and are the kindest critics as well as best authors. I am scribbling a muddy epistle with an aching head, for we did not quaff Hippocrene last night; marry, it was hippocrass rather. Pray accept this as a letter in the meantime, and do me the favour to mention my respects to Mr. Mitford, who is so good as to entertain good thoughts of Elia, but don't show this almost impertinent scrawl. I will write more respectfully next time, for believe me, if not in words, in feelings yours most so. C. L.

LETTER CLXXXV.] March 11th, 1823.

Dear Sir,—The approbation of my little book by your sister is very pleasing to me. The Quaker incident did not happen to me, but to Carlisle the surgeon, from whose mouth I have twice heard it, at an interval of ten or twelve years, with little or no variation, and have given it as exactly as I could remember it. The gloss which your sister or you

have put upon it does not strike me as correct. Carlisle drew no inference from it against the honesty of the Quakers, but only in favour of their surpassing coolness; that they should be capable of committing a good joke, with an utter insensibility to its being any jest at all. I have reason to believe in the truth of it, because, as I have said, I heard him repeat it without variation at such an interval. The story loses sadly in print, for Carlisle is the best story-teller I ever heard. The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs I also borrowed, from my friend Manning, and am willing to confess both my plagiarisms. Should fate ever so order it that you shall be in town with your sister, mine bids me say, that she shall have great pleasure in being introduced to her. I think I must give up the cause of the Bank; from 9 to 9 is galley slavery, but I hope it is but temporary. Your endeavour at explaining Fox's insight into the natures of animals must fail, as I shall transcribe the passage. It appears to me that he stopt short in time, and was on the brink of falling with his friend Naylor, my favourite. The book shall be forthcoming whenever your friend can make convenient to call for it.

They have dragged me again into the Magazine, but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind quite gone.[1] "Some brains" (I think Ben Jonson says it) "will endure but one skimming." We are about to have an inundation of poetry from the Lakes: Wordsworth and Southey are coming up strong from the North. The She Coleridges have taken

[1] For two years' contributions to the *London Magazine*, Lamb received only £170.—F.

flight, to my regret. With Sara's own-made acquisitions, her unaffectedness and no-pretensions are beautiful. You might pass an age with her without suspecting that she knew any thing but her mother's tongue. I don't mean any reflections on Mrs. Coleridge here. I had better have said her vernacular idiom. Poor C., I wish he had a home to receive his daughter in; but he is but as a stranger or a visitor in this world.

How did you like Hartley's sonnets? The first, at least, is vastly fine. I am ashamed of the shabby letters I send, but I am by nature any thing but neat. Therein my mother bore me no Quaker. I never could seal a letter without dropping the wax on one side, besides scalding my fingers. I never had a seal, too, of my own. Writing to a great man lately, who is moreover very heraldic, I borrowed a seal of a friend, who by the female side quarters the Protectoral arms of Cromwell. How they must have puzzled my correspondent! My letters are generally charged as double at the Post Office, from their inveterate clumsiness of foldure; so you must not take it disrespectful to yourself if I send you such ungainly scraps. I think I lose £100 a year at the India House, owing solely to my want of neatness in making up accounts. How I puzzle 'em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions!!

It is time to have done my incoherences.

Believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXXXVI.] May 3rd, 1823.

Dear Sir,—I am vexed to be two letters in your debt, but I have been quite out of the vein lately. A philosophical treatise is wanting, of the causes of the backwardness with which persons after a certain time of life set about writing a letter. I always feel as if I had nothing to say, and the performance generally justifies the presentiment. Taylor and Hessey did foolishly in not admitting the sonnet. Surely it might have followed the B. B. I agree with you in thinking Bowring's paper better than the former. I will inquire about my letter to the old gentleman, but I expect it to *go in*, after those to the young gentleman are completed.

I do not exactly see why the goose and little goslings should emblematize *a Quaker poet that has no children*. But, after all, perhaps it is a pelican. The "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" around it I cannot decipher. The songster of the night pouring out her effusions amid a silent meeting of madge-owlets, would be at least intelligible. A full pause here comes upon me, as if I had not a word more left. I will shake my brain, Once! Twice!—nothing comes up. George Fox recommends waiting on these occasions. I wait. Nothing comes. G. Fox —that sets me off again. I have finished the "Journal," and 400 more pages of the "*Doctrinals*," which I picked up for 7*s*. 6*d*. If I get on at this rate, the society will be in danger of having two Quaker poets to patronise. I am at Dalston now; but if when I go back to Covent Garden I find thy friend has not

called for the "Journal," thee must put me in the way of sending it; and if it should happen the lender of it, knowing that volume has not the other, I shall be most happy in his accepting the "*Doctrinals*," which I shall read but once certainly. It is not a splendid copy, but perfect, save a leaf of Index.

I cannot but think that the *London* drags heavily. I miss Janus. And oh how it misses Hazlitt! Procter too is affronted.

Believe me cordially yours,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CLXXXVII.] July 10th, 1823.

Dear Sir,—I shall be happy to read the MS. and to forward it; but T[aylor] and H[essey] must judge for themselves of publication. If it prove interesting (as I doubt not) I shall not spare to say so, you may depend upon it. Suppose you direct it to Accountant's Office, India House. I am glad you have met with some sweetening circumstances to your unpalatable draught. I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet a while; home is the most unforgiving of friends, and always resents absence; I know its old cordial looks will return, but they are slow in

clearing up. That is one of the features of this *our* galley slavery; that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings; and just as I had learned to domiciliate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots, inland bays, &c., which realise the notions of Juan Fernandez. The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country church, (by whom or when built unknown,) standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it through beautiful woods to so many farm-houses. There it stands like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation; or like a hermit's oratory (the hermit dead), or a mausoleum; its effect singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image. You must make out a vicar and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there; yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all the seemly additaments of *our* worship.

Southey has attacked "Elia" on the score of infidelity, in the *Quarterly* article, "Progress of Infidelity." I had not, nor have seen the *Monthly*. He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion. If all *his* unguarded expressions on the subject were to be collected——! But I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I hate his review, and his being a reviewer. The hint he has dropped will knock the sale of the book on the head; which was almost at a stop before. Let it stop,—there is corn in Egypt,

while there is cash at Leadenhall. You and I are something besides being writers, thank God!

Yours truly, C. L.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.] September 2nd, 1823.

Dear B. B.,—What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. Hessey has not used your kind sonnet, nor have I seen it. Pray send me a copy. Neither have I heard any more of your friend's MS., which I will reclaim whenever you please. When you come London-ward you will find me no longer in Covent Garden. I have a cottage in Colebrook Row, Islington; a cottage, for it is detached; a white house, with six good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace may be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden with vines, (I assure you,) pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books: and above is a lightsome drawing-room, three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great lord, never having had a house before.

The *London*, I fear, falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat; it will topple down if they don't get some buttresses. They have pulled down three: Hazlitt, Procter, and their best stay, kind, light-hearted Wainwright, their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concerned in it.

I heard of you from Mr. Pulham this morning, and

that gave a fillip to my laziness, which has been intolerable; but I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gathered my jargonels, but my Windsor pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of father Adam. I recognise the paternity while I watch my tulips. I almost fell with him, for the first day I turned a drunken gardener (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, &c., which hung over from a neighbour's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers-by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talked of the law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy "garden-state!"

I hope you transmitted the Fox-Journal to its owner, with suitable thanks. Mr. Cary, the Dante-man, dines with me to-day. He is a model of a country parson, lean, (as a curate ought to be,) modest, sensible, no obtruder of church dogmas, quite a different man from Southey. You would like him. Pray accept this for a letter, and believe me, with sincere regards, Yours, C. L.

LETTER CLXXXIX.] September 17th, 1823

Dear Sir,—I have again been reading your "Stanzas on Bloomfield," which are the most appropriate that can be imagined,—sweet with Doric delicacy. I like that,—

"Our own more chaste Theocritus"—

just hinting at the fault of the Grecian. I love that stanza ending with,

"Words, phrases, fashions, pass away;
But truth and nature live through all."

But I shall omit in my own copy the one stanza which alludes to Lord B. I suppose. It spoils the sweetness and oneness of the feeling. Cannot we think of Burns, or Thomson, without sullying the thought with a reflection out of place upon Lord Rochester? These verses might have been inscribed upon a tomb; are in fact an epitaph; satire does not look pretty upon a tombstone. Besides, there is a quotation in it, always bad in verse, seldom advisable in prose. I doubt if their having been in a paper will not prevent T. and H. from insertion; but I shall have a thing to send in a day or two, and shall try them. Omitting that stanza, a very little alteration is wanting in the beginning of the next. You see, I use freedom. How happily (I flatter not) you have brought in his subjects; and (I suppose) his favourite measure, though I am not acquainted with any of his writings but the *Farmer's Boy*. He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly.

I rejoice that you forgive my long silence. I continue to estimate my own-roof comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger! My garden

thrives, (I am told,) though I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny salad and withered carrots. But a garden's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London.

Somehow I cannot relish that word "Hockey." Cannot you supply it by circumlocution, and direct the reader by a note to explain that it means the Hockey. But Hockey choaks me in the text. It raises crowds of mean associations, hawking and sp——g, gawky, stalky, mawkish! The sound is every thing, in such dulcet modulations 'specially. I like

"Gilbert Meldrum's sterner tones,"

without knowing who Gilbert Meldrum is. You have slipt in your rhymes as if they grew there, so natural-artificially, or artificial-naturally. There's a vile phrase!

Do you go on with your "Quaker Sonnets?" Have 'em ready with "Southey's Book of the Church." I meditate a letter to S. in the *London*, which perhaps will meet the fate of the Sonnet.

Excuse my brevity, for I write painfully at office, liable to a hundred callings off; and I can never sit down to an epistle elsewhere. I read or walk. If you return this letter to the Post Office, I think they will return fourpence, seeing it is but half a one. Believe me, though,

Entirely yours, C. L.

LETTER CXC.] [Nov. 22, 1823.]

Dear B. B.,—I am ashamed at not acknowledging your kind little poem, which I must needs like much;

but I protest I thought I had done it at the moment. Is it possible a letter has miscarried? Did you get one in which I sent you an extract from the poems of Lord Stirling? I should wonder if you did, for I sent you none such. There was an incipient lie strangled in the birth. Some people's conscience is so tender! But, in plain truth, I thank you very much for the verses. I have a very kind letter from the Laureat, with a self-invitation to come and shake hands with me. This is truly handsome and noble. 'Tis worthy of my old idea of Southey. Shall not I, think you, be covered with a red suffusion?

You are too much apprehensive of your complaint: I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who, when his medical adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest liver of the two.

The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can, as ignorant as the world was before Galen, of the entire inner construction of the animal man; not to be conscious of a midriff; to hold kidneys (save of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction; not to know whereabout the gall grows; to account the circulation of the blood an idle whimsey of Harvey's; to acknowledge no mechanism not visible. For, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like bad humours. Those medical gentries choose each his favourite part; one takes the lungs, another the aforesaid liver, and refer to that whatever in the animal economy is amiss. Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good con-

science, and avoid tampering with hard terms of art —viscosity, scirrhosity, and those bugbears by which simple patients are scared into their graves. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world, which holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of tailors! Think how long the Lord Chancellor sits! Think of the brooding hen! I protest I cannot answer thy sister's kind inquiry; but I judge, I shall put forth no second volume. More praise than buy; and T. and H. are not particularly disposed for martyrs. Thou wilt see a funny passage, and yet a true history, of George Dyer's aquatic incursion in the next *London*. Beware his fate, when thou comest to see me at my Colebrook Cottage. I have filled my little space with my little thoughts. I wish thee ease on thy sofa; but not too much indulgence on it. From my poor desk, thy fellow-sufferer, this bright November, C. L.

LETTER CXCI.] Jan. 9th, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day-mare,—"a whoreson lethargy," Falstaff calls it,—an indisposition to do any thing, or to be any thing,—a total deadness and distaste, a suspension of vitality,—an indifference to locality,—a numb, soporifical, good-for-nothingness, —an ossification all over,—an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events,—a mind-stupor,—a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in con-

science? Did you ever have a very bad cold, with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes? This has been for many weeks my lot and my excuse. My fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three-and-twenty furlongs from here to the end of this demi-sheet. I have not a thing to say; no thing is of a more importance than another; I am flatter than a denial or a pancake; emptier than Judge Park's wig when the head is in it; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it; a cipher, an 0! I acknowledge life at all, only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest. I am weary of the world; life is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight, and I don't think it worth the expense of candles. My wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it. I inhale suffocation; I can't distinguish veal from mutton; nothing interests me. 'Tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop, Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality; yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection. If you told me the world will be at an end to-morrow, I should just say, "Will it?" I have not volition enough left to dot my *i*'s, much less to comb my eyebrows; my eyes are set in my head; my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again; my skull is a Grub Street attic, to let—not so much as a joint-stool or a crack'd jordan left in it; my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are off. O for a vigorous fit of gout, cholic, toothache,—an earwig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs! Pain is life—the sharper, the

more evidence of life; but this apathy, this death! Did you ever have an obstinate cold,—a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and every thing? Yet do I try all I can to cure it; I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities; but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It is just fifteen minutes after twelve. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion perhaps; Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat. The Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns; but, on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes.

C. L.

LETTER CXCII.] Jan. 23rd, 1824.

My dear sir,—That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light; it was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold. The fact is, I have been insuperably dull and lethargic for many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a letter, much less an essay. The *London* must do without me for a time, for I have lost all interest about it; and whether I shall recover it again I know not. I will bridle my pen another time, and not teaze and puzzle you with my

aridities. I shall begin to feel a little more alive with the Spring. Winter is to me (mild or harsh) always a great trial of the spirits. I am ashamed not to have noticed your tribute to Woolman, whom we love so much. It is done in your good manner. Your friend Taylor called upon me some time since, and seems a very amiable man. His last story is painfully fine. His book I "like;" it is only too stuffed with Scripture, too parsonish. The best thing in it is the boy's own story. When I say it is too full of Scripture, I mean it is too full of direct quotations. No book can have too much of silent Scripture in it; but the natural power of a story is diminished when the uppermost purpose in the writer seems to be to recommend something else, viz., Religion. You know what Horace says of the *Deus intersit.* I am not able to explain myself,—you must do it for me. My sister's part in the "Leicester School" (about two-thirds) was purely her own; as it was (to the same quantity) in the "Shakspeare Tales" which bear my name. I wrote only the "Witch Aunt;" the "First Going to Church;" and the final story, about "A little Indian girl," in a ship. Your account of my black-balling amused me. *I think, as Quakers, they did right.* There are some things hard to be understood. The more I think, the more I am vexed at having puzzled you with that letter; but I have been so out of letter-writing of late years, that it is a sore effort to sit down to it; and I felt in your debt, and sat down waywardly to pay you in bad money. Never mind my dulness; I am used to long intervals of it. The heavens seem brass to me; then again comes the refreshing shower—

"I have been merry once or twice ere now."

You said something about Mr. Mitford in a late letter, which I believe I did not advert to. I shall be happy to show him my Milton (it is all the show things I have) at any time he will take the trouble of a jaunt to Islington. I do also hope to see Mr. Taylor there some day. Pray say so to both. Coleridge's book is in good part printed, but sticks a little for *more copy*. It bears an unsaleable title, "Extracts from Bishop Leighton;" but I am confident there will be plenty of good notes in it, more of Bishop Coleridge than Leighton, I hope; for what is Leighton? Do you trouble yourself about libel cases? The decision against Hunt for the "Vision of Judgment" made me sick. What is to become of the good old talk about our good old King?—his personal virtues saving us from a revolution, &c. &c.! Why, none that think can utter it now. It must stink. And the "vision" is really, as to him-ward, such a tolerant, good-humoured thing. What a wretched thing a Lord Chief Justice is, always was, and will be!

Keep your good spirits up, dear B. B.; mine will return; they are at present in abeyance; but I am rather lethargic than miserable. I don't know but a good horsewhip would be more beneficial to me than physic. My head, without aching, will teach yours to ache. It is well I am getting to the conclusion. I will send a better letter when I am a better man. Let me thank you for your kind concern for me, (which I trust will have reason soon to be dissipated,) and assure you that it gives me pleasure to hear from you.

Yours truly, C. L.

LETTER CXCIII.] February 25th, 1824.

My dear sir,—Your title of "Poetic Vigils" arrides me much more than a volume of verse, which has no meaning. The motto says nothing, but I cannot suggest a better. I do not like mottoes but where they are singularly felicitous; there is foppery in them; they are un-plain, un-Quakerish; they are good only where they flow from the title, and are a kind of justification of it. There is nothing about watchings or lucubrations in the one you suggest; no commentary on vigils. By the way, a wag would recommend you to the line of Pope,

"Sleepless himself—to give his readers sleep."

I by no means wish it; but it may explain what I mean,—that a neat motto is child of the title. I think "Poetic Vigils" as short and sweet as can be desired; only have an eye on the proof, that the printer do not substitute Virgils, which would ill accord with your modesty or meaning. Your suggested motto is antique enough in spelling, and modern enough in phrases,—a good modern antique; but the matter of it is germain to the purpose, only supposing the title proposed a vindication of yourself from the presumption of authorship. The first title was liable to this objection—that if you were disposed to enlarge it, and the bookseller insisted on its appearance in two tomes, how oddly it would sound, "A Volume of Verse in two Volumes, Second Edition," &c. You see through my wicked intention of curtailing this epistolet by the above device of large margin. But in truth the idea of letterizing has been oppressive to me of late above your candour to give me credit for. There is Southey, whom I

ought to have thanked a fortnight ago for a present of the "Church Book:" I have never had courage to buckle myself in earnest even to acknowledge it by six words; and yet I am accounted by some people a good man! How cheap that character is acquired! Pay your debts, don't borrow money, nor twist your kitten's neck off, nor disturb a congregation, &c., your business is done. I know things (thoughts or things, thoughts *are* things) of myself, which would make every friend I have fly me as a plague patient. I once * * *, and set a dog upon a crab's leg that was shoved out under a mass of sea-weeds,—a pretty little feeler. Oh pah! how sick I am of that! and a lie, a mean one, I once told! I stink in the midst of respect. I am much hypt. The fact is, my head is heavy, but there is hope; or if not, I am better than a poor shell-fish; not morally, when I set the whelp upon it, but have more blood and spirits. Things may turn up, and I may creep again into a decent opinion of myself. Vanity will return with sunshine. Till when, pardon my neglects, and impute it to the wintry solstice.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXCIV.] March 24th, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offered. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical Ministry—nothing worse: the Minister is worthy of the hire. The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temp-

tation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth, and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker* because of the ambiguity of the word "light," which Donne, in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation—

"Make my *dark*[1] *heavy*[2] poem, *light*[1] and *light*,[2]"

where the two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism. I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power of course to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's *Cases of Conscience*, and Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium;* the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of 900 close pages; and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons *pro* and *con* which they give for every possible case, you will be—— just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best casuist; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth, in the pleasant comedy of *Wild Oats*, has it, "there is no harm in a Guinea." *A fortiori* there is less in 2000.

I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the Bank; but in either case do not refuse an honest service.

Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily.

C. L.

LETTER CXCV.] July 7th, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—I have been suffering under a severe inflammation of the eyes, notwithstanding which I resolutely went through your very pretty volume at once, which I dare pronounce in no ways inferior to former lucubrations. "*Abroad*" and "*lord*" are vile rhymes notwithstanding, and if you count you will wonder how many times you have repeated the word *unearthly;* thrice in one poem. It is become a slang word with the bards; avoid it in future lustily. "Time" is fine; but there are better a good deal, I think. The volume does not lie by me; and after a long day's smarting fatigue, which has almost put out my eyes, (not blind however to your merits,) I dare not trust myself with long writing. The verses to Bloomfield are the sweetest in the collection. Religion is sometimes lugged in, as if it did not come naturally. I will go over carefully when I get my seeing, and exemplify. You have also too much of singing metre, such as requires no deep ear to make; lilting measure, in which you have done Woolman injustice. Strike at less superficial melodies. The piece on Nayler is more to my fancy.

My eye runs waters... But I will give you a fuller account some day. The book is a very pretty one

in more than one sense. The decorative harp, perhaps, too ostentatious; a simple pipe preferable.

Farewell, and many thanks.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CXCVI.] August, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—I congratulate you on getting a house over your head. I find the comfort of it I am sure. At my town lodgings the mistress was always quarrelling with our maid, and at my place of rustication the whole family were always beating one another, brothers beating sisters, (one, a most beautiful girl, lamed for life,) father beating sons and daughters, and son again beating his father, knocking him fairly down, a scene I never before witnessed, but was called out of bed by the unnatural blows, the parricidal colour of which, though my morals could not but condemn, yet my reason did heartily approve, and in the issue the house was quieter for a day or so than I had ever known. I am now all harmony and quiet, even to the sometimes wishing back again some of the old rufflings. There is something stirring in these civil broils.

The album shall be attended to. If I can light upon a few appropriate rhymes (but rhymes come with difficulty from me now) I shall beg a place in the neat margin of your young housekeeper.

The "Prometheus," *unbound*, is a capital story. The literal rogue! What if you had ordered "Elfrida" in *sheets!* she'd have been sent up I warrant you. Or bid him clasp his Bible, (*i.e.* to his bosom), he'd have clapt on a brass clasp, no doubt.

I can no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is "thin sown with profit or delight." Yet I must point to your notice a sonnet conceived and expressed with a witty delicacy. It is that addressed to one who hated him, but who could not persuade him to hate *him* again. His coyness to the other's passion—(for hate demands a return as much as love, and starves without it)—is most arch and pleasant. Pray, like it very much. For his theories and nostrums, they are oracular enough; but I either comprehend 'em not, or there is "miching malice" and mischief in 'em, but, for the most part, ringing with their own emptiness. Hazlitt said well of 'em —"Many are the wiser and better for reading Shakspeare, but nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Shelley." I wonder you will sow your correspondence on so barren a ground as I am, that make such poor returns. But my head aches at the bare thought of letter-writing. I wish all the ink in the ocean dried up, and would listen to the quills shivering up in the candle flame, like parching martyrs. The same indisposition to write has stopped my "Elias;" but you will see a futile effort in the next Number, "wrung from me with slow pain." The fact is, my head is seldom cool enough. I am dreadfully indolent. To have to do any thing—to order me a new coat, for instance, though my old buttons are shelled like beans—is an effort. My pen stammers like my tongue. What cool craniums those old inditers of folios must have had!—what a mortified pulse! Well; once more I throw myself on your mercy. Wishing peace in thy new dwelling,

C. Lamb.

[WITH "ALBUM VERSES" FOR LUCY BARTON.]

LETTER CXCVII.].

Dear B. B.,—"I am ill at these numbers;" but if the above be not too mean to have a place in thy daughter's sanctum, take them with pleasure. I assume that her name is Hannah, because it is a pretty scriptural cognomen.

I began on another sheet of paper, and just as I had penned the second line of stanza two, an ugly blot fell, to illustrate my counsel. I am sadly given to blot, and modern blotting-paper gives no redress; it only smears, and makes it worse. The only remedy is scratching out, which gives it a clerkish look. The most innocent blots are made with red ink, and are rather ornamental. Marry, they are not always to be distinguished from the effusions of a cut finger. Well, I hope and trust thy tick-doleru, or however you spell it, is vanished, for I have frightful impressions of that tick, and do altogether hate it, as an unpaid score, or the tick of a death-watch. I take it to be a species of Vitus's dance. (I omit the sanctity, writing to "one of the men called friends.") I knew a young lady who could dance no other; she danced it through life, and very queer and fantastic were her steps.

Heaven bless thee from such measures, and keep thee from the foul fiend, who delights to lead after

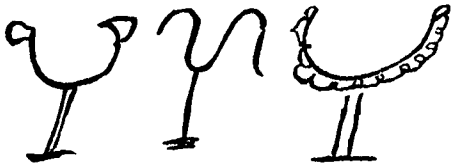
false fires in the night, Flibbertigibbet, that gives the web, and I forget what else.

From my den, as Bunyan has it, 30th Sep. 1824.

C. L.

LETTER CXCVIII.] December 1st, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a gentleman resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, further perhaps than he thinks; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgwood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his Arms upon them, &c. I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject, but he will probably consult his own taste after all.



The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet-williams, and that sort. My friend in Canton is Inspector of Teas; his name is Ball; and I can think of no better tunnel. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

Taylor and Hessey finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2*s*. 6*d*. are prudently going to raise their price another shilling; and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the *New Monthly*, they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcase of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like George Dyer multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two; two stick, he tries three; three hang fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance.

And now, my dear sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as, by a parity of situation, are exposed to a similarity of temptation. My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual, with the change of theme. Who that standeth, knoweth but he may yet fall? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into other's property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence; but so thought Fauntleroy once; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated as he hath done. You are as yet upright; but you are a banker, at least the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject; but cash must pass through your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour ———but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged, that would be indifferent to the fate of a

Presbyterian or an Anabaptist. Think of the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone, not to mention higher considerations! I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the law, at one time of their life, made as sure of never being hanged, as I in my presumption am too ready to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? Is there any distinctive mark under our left ears? Are we unstrangleable, I ask you? Think of these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something), but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering, &c. No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble.

C. L.

LETTER CXCIX.] February 10th, 1825.

Dear B. B.,—I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault, and my weakness, that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it, for God's sake. The "Spirit of the Age" is by Hazlitt. The characters of Coleridge, &c. he had done better in former publications, the praise and the abuse much stronger, &c.; but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice is, to borrow it rather than buy it. I have it. He has laid too many colours on my likeness; but I have had so much injustice done me in my own

name, that I make a rule of accepting as much over-measure to Elia as gentlemen think proper to bestow. Lay it on and spare not. Your gentleman brother sets my mouth a-watering after liberty. Oh that I were kicked out of Leadenhall with every mark of indignity, and a competence in my fob! The birds of the air would not be so free as I should. How I would prance and curvet it, and pick up cowslips, and ramble about purposeless, as an idiot! The author-mometer is a good fancy. I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not *thy*) world by a lying "Life of Liston," all pure invention. The town has swallowed it, and it is copied into news-papers, play-bills, &c., as authentic. You do not know the Droll, and possibly missed reading the article (in our first Number, new series). A life more improbable for him to have lived would not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with "Dream on J. Bunyan," checks me. I'd rather do more in my favourite way, but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriacus, and *not* Liston. The second Number is all trash. What are T. and H. about? Why did poor Scott die? There was comfort in writing with such associates as were his little band of scribblers; some gone away, some affronted away, and I am left as the solitary widow looking for water-cresses. The only clever hand they have is Darley, who has written on the Dramatists under the name of John Lacy. But his function seems suspended.

I have been harassed more than usually at office, which has stopt my correspondence lately. I write with a confused aching head, and you must accept this apology for a letter.

I will do something soon, if I can, as a peace-offering to the queen of the East Angles—something she shan't scold about. For the present farewell.

Thine, C. L.

I am fifty years old this day. Drink my health.

LETTER CC.] March 23rd, 1825.

Dear B. B.,—I have had no impulse to write, or attend to any single object but myself for weeks past —my single self, I by myself—I. I am sick of hope deferred. The grand wheel is in agitation, that is to turn up my fortune; but round it rolls, and will turn up nothing. I have a glimpse of freedom, of becoming a gentleman at large; but I am put off from day to day. I have offered my resignation, and it is neither accepted nor rejected. Eight weeks am I kept in this fearful suspense. Guess what an absorbing stake I feel it. I am not conscious of the existence of friends present or absent. The East India Directors alone can be that thing to me or not. I have just learned that nothing will be decided this week. Why the next? Why any week? It has fretted me into an itch of the fingers; I rub 'em against paper, and write to you, rather than not allay this scorbuta.

While I can write, let me abjure you to have no doubts of IRVING. Let Mr. Mitford drop his disrespect. Irving has prefixed a dedication (of a missionary subject, first part) to Coleridge, the most beautiful, cordial, and sincere. He there acknowledges his obligation to S. T. C. for his knowledge of Gospel truths, the nature of a Christian Church, &c., to the talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (at whose Gamaliel feet he sits weekly), rather than to that of

all the men living. This from him, the great dandled and petted sectarian—to a religious character so equivocal in the world's eye as that of S. T. C., so foreign to the Kirk's estimate—can this man be a quack? The language is as affecting as the spirit of the dedication. Some friend told him, "This dedication will do you no good," *i.e.* not in the world's repute, or with your own people. "That is a reason for doing it," quoth Irving.

I am thoroughly pleased with him. He is firm, out-speaking, intrepid, and docile as a pupil of Pythagoras. You must like him.

Yours, in tremors of painful hope,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCI.] April, 1825.

Dear B. B.,—My spirits are so tumultuary with the novelty of my recent emancipation, that I have scarce steadiness of hand, much more mind, to compose a letter. I am free, B. B.—free as air!

"The little bird that wings the sky
Knows no such liberty."

I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o'clock. I came home for ever!

I have been describing my feelings as well as I can to Wordsworth in a long letter, and don't care to repeat. Take it briefly, that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change, but it is becoming daily more natural to me. I went and sat among 'em all at my old thirty-three years' desk yester morning; and, deuce take me, if I had not yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry, sociable lads, at leaving them in the lurch,

fag, fag, fag!—The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me any thing but pleasure.

B. B., I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds! I have got £441 net for life, sanctioned by Act of Parliament, with a provision for Mary if she survives me. I will live another fifty years; or, if I live but ten, they will be thirty, reckoning the quantity of real time in them, *i. e.* the time that is a man's own. Tell me how you like "Barbara S."[1] Will it be received in atonement for the foolish "Vision?"—I mean by the lady. *A-propos*, I never saw Mrs. Crawford in my life; nevertheless 'tis all true of somebody.

Address me, in future, Colebrook Cottage, Islington. I am really nervous, (but that will wear off,) so take this brief announcement.

Yours truly, C. L.

LETTER CCII.] July 2nd, 1825.

My dear B. B.,—My nervous attack has so unfitted me that I have not courage to sit down to a letter. My poor pittance in the *London* you will see is drawn from my sickness. Your book is very acceptable to me, because most of it is new to me; but your book itself we cannot thank you for more sincerely than for the introduction you favoured us with to Anne Knight. Now cannot I write *Mrs.* Anne Knight for the life of me. She is a very pleas——, but I won't write all we have said of her so often to ourselves,

[1] The true heroine of this beautiful story is still living, though she has left the stage. It is enough to make a severer Quaker than B. B feel that "there is some soul of goodness" in players.—T.

because I suspect you would read it to her. Only give my sister's and my kindest *remembrances* to her, and how glad we are we can say that word. If ever she come to Southwark again, I count upon another pleasant Bridge walk with her. Tell her, I got home, time for a rubber; but poor Tryphena will not understand that phrase of the worldlings.

I am hardly able to appreciate your volume now: but I liked the dedication much, and the apology for your bald burying grounds. To Shelley; but *that* is not new. To the young vesper-singer, Great Bealings, Playford, and what not.

If there be a cavil, it is that the topics of religious consolation, however beautiful, are repeated till a sort of triteness attends them. It seems as if you were for ever losing friends' children by death, and reminding their parents of the Resurrection. Do children die so often, and so good, in your parts? The topic taken from the consideration that they are snatched away from *possible vanities*, seems hardly sound; for to an Omniscient eye their conditional failings must be one with their actual; but I am too unwell for theology.

Such as I am,
I am yours and A[nne] K[night's] truly,
C. LAMB.

LETTER CCIII.] August 10th, 1825.

We shall be soon again at Colebrook.

Dear B. B.,—You must excuse my not writing before, when I tell you we are on a visit at Enfield, where I do not feel it natural to sit down to a letter. It is at all times an exertion. I would rather talk with

you and Anne Knight quietly at Colebrook Lodge, over the matter of your last. You mistake me when you express misgivings about my relishing a series of scriptural poems. I wrote confusedly. What I meant to say was, that one or two consolatory poems on deaths would have had a more condensed effect than many. Scriptural, devotional topics admit of infinite variety. So far from poetry tiring me because religious, I can read, and I say it seriously, the homely old version of the Psalms in our Prayer Books for an hour or two together sometimes without sense of weariness.

I did not express myself clearly about what I think a false topic insisted on so frequently in consolatory addresses on the death of infants. I know something like it is in Scripture, but I think humanly spoken. It is a natural thought, a sweet fallacy to the survivors, but still a fallacy. If it stands on the doctrine of this being a probationary state, it is liable to this dilemma. Omniscience, to whom possibility must be clear as act, must know of the child, what it would hereafter turn out: if good, then the topic is false to say it is secured from falling into future wilfulness, vice, &c. If bad, I do not see how its exemption from certain future overt acts, by being snatched away, at all tells in its favour. You stop the arm of a murderer, or arrest the finger of a pickpurse; but is not the guilt incurred as much by the intent as if never so much acted? Why children are hurried off, and old reprobates of a hundred left, whose trial humanly we may think was complete at fifty, is among the obscurities of Providence. The very notion of a state of probation has darkness in it. The All-knower has no need of satisfying His eyes by

seeing what we will do, when He knows before what we will do. Methinks we might be condemned before commission. In these things we grope and flounder, and if we can pick up a little human comfort that the child taken is snatched from vice, (no great compliment to it, by the by,) let us take it. And as to where an untried child goes, whether to join the assembly of its elders who have borne the heat of the day—fire-purified martyrs, and torment-sifted confessors—what know we? We promise heaven, methinks, too cheaply, and assign large revenues to minors, incompetent to manage them. Epitaphs run upon this topic of consolation, till the very frequency induces a cheapness. Tickets for admission into Paradise are sculptured out at a penny a letter, twopence a syllable, &c. It is all a mystery; and the more I try to express my meaning (having none that is clear), the more I founder. Finally, write what your own conscience, which to you is the unerring judge, seems best, and be careless about the whimsies of such a half-baked notionist as I am. We are here in a most pleasant country, full of walks, and idle to our hearts' desire. Taylor has dropt the *London*. It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry shoulders. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and every thing that is bad. Both our kind *remembrances* to Mrs. K. and yourself, and strangers'-greeting to Lucy (is it Lucy or Ruth?) that gathers wise sayings in a Book.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCIV.] Feb. 7th, 1826.

Dear B. B.,—I got your book not more than five

days ago, so am not so negligent as I must have appeared to you with a fortnight's sin upon my shoulders. I tell you with sincerity, that I think you have completely succeeded in what you intended to do. What is poetry may be disputed. These are poetry, to me at least. They are concise, pithy, and moving. Uniform as they are, and untristorify'd, I read them through at two sittings, without one sensation approaching to tedium. I do not know that among your many kind presents of this nature, this is not my favourite volume. The language is never lax, and there is a unity of design and feeling. You wrote them *with love*—to avoid the cox*combical* phrase, *con amore*. I am particularly pleased with the "Spiritual Law," pages 34 and 35. It reminded me of Quarles, and "holy Mr. Herbert," as Izaak Walton calls him; the two best, if not only, of our devotional poets, though some prefer Watts, and some *Tom Moore*. I am far from well, or in my right spirits, and shudder at pen-and-ink work. I poke out a monthly crudity for Colburn in his magazine, which I call "Popular Fallacies," and periodically crush a proverb or two, setting up my folly against the wisdom of nations. Do you see the *New Monthly?*

One word I must object to in your little book, and it recurs more than once—*fadeless* is no genuine compound; loveless is, because love is a noun as well as verb; but what is a fade? And I do not quite like whipping the Greek drama upon the back of "Genesis," page 8. I do not like praise handed in by disparagement; as I objected to a side censure on Byron, &c. in the "Lines on Bloomfield." With these poor cavils excepted, your verses are without a flaw.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCV.] March 20th, 1826.

Dear B. B.,—You may know my letters by the paper and the folding. For the former, I live on scraps obtained in charity from an old friend, whose stationery is a permanent perquisite; for folding, I shall do it neatly when I learn to tie my neck-cloths. I surprise most of my friends by writing to them on ruled paper, as if I had not got past pot-hooks and hangers. Sealing-wax, I have none on my establishment; wafers of the coarsest bran supply its place. When my epistles come to be weighed with Pliny's, however superior to the Roman in delicate irony, judicious reflections, &c., his gilt post will bribe over the judges to him. All the time I was at the E. I. H. I never mended a pen; I now cut 'em to the stumps, marring rather than mending the primitive goose-quill. I cannot bear to pay for articles I used to get for nothing. When Adam laid out his first penny upon nonpareils at some stall in Mesopotamos, I think it went hard with him, reflecting upon his old goodly orchard, where he had so many for nothing. When I write to a great man at the Court end, he opens with surprise upon a naked note, such as Whitechapel people interchange, with no sweet degrees of envelope. I never enclosed one bit of paper in another, nor understood the rationale of it. Once only I sealed with borrowed wax, to set Walter Scott a wondering, signed with the imperial quartered arms of England, which my friend Field gives in compliment to his descent, in the female line, from Oliver Cromwell. It must have set his antiquarian curiosity upon watering. To your questions upon the currency, I refer you to Mr. Robinson's last speech, where, if you can find a solution, I

can not. I think this, though, the best ministry we ever stumbled upon;—gin reduced four shillings in the gallon, wine two shillings in the quart! This comes home to men's minds and bosoms. My tirade against visitors was not meant *particularly* at you or A. K——. I scarce know what I meant, for I do not just now feel the grievance. I wanted to make an *article*. So in another thing I talked of somebody's *insipid wife*, without a correspondent object in my head: and a good lady, a friend's wife, whom I really *love*, (don't startle, I mean in a licit way,) has looked shyly on me ever since. The blunders of personal application are ludicrous. I send out a character every now and then, on purpose to exercise the ingenuity of my friends. "Popular Fallacies" will go on; that word "concluded" is an erratum, I suppose for "continued." I do not know how it got stuffed in there. A little thing without name will also be printed on the Religion of the Actors, but it is out of your way, so I recommend you, with true author's hypocrisy, to skip it. We are about to sit down to roast beef, at which we could wish A. K., B. B., and B. B.'s pleasant daughter to be humble partakers. So much for my hint at visitors, which was scarcely calculated for droppers-in from Woodbridge; the sky does not drop such larks every day. My very kindest wishes to you all three, with my sister's best love.

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCVI.] May 16th, 1826.

Dear B. B.,—I have had no spirits lately to begin a letter to you, though I am under obligations to you (how many!) for your neat little poem. 'Tis just

what it professes to be, a simple tribute, in chaste verse, serious and sincere.

I do not know how friends will relish it, but we outlyers, honorary friends, like it very well. I have had my head and ears stuffed up with the East winds: a continual ringing in my brain of bells jangled, or the spheres touched by some raw angel. Is it not George the Third trying the Hundredth Psalm? I get my music for nothing. But the weather seems to be softening, and will thaw my stunnings. Coleridge, writing to me a week or two since, begins his note—"Summer has set in with its usual severity." A cold Summer is all I know of disagreeable in cold. I do not mind the utmost rigour of real Winter, but these smiling hypocrites of Mays wither me to death. My head has been a ringing chaos, like the day the winds were made, before they submitted to the discipline of a weathercock, before the quarters were made. In the street, with the blended noises of life about me, I hear, and my head is lightened; but in a room the hubbub comes back, and I am deaf as a sinner. Did I tell you of a pleasant sketch Hood has done, which he calls—"*Very deaf indeed*"? It is of a good-natured stupid-looking old gentleman, whom a footpad has stopped, but for his extreme deafness cannot make him understand what he wants. The unconscious old gentleman is extending his ear-trumpet very complacently, and the fellow is firing a pistol into it to make him hear, but the ball will pierce his skull sooner than the report will reach his sensorium. I choose a very little bit of paper, for my ear hisses when I bend down to write. I can hardly read a book, for I miss that small soft voice which the idea of articulated words raises (almost

imperceptibly to you) in a silent reader. I seem too deaf to see what I read. But with a touch or two of returning zephyr my head will melt. What lies you poets tell about the May! It is the most ungenial part of the year. Cold crocuses, cold primroses, you take your blossoms in ice—a painted sun.

> "Unmeaning joy around appears,
> And Nature smiles as if she sneers."

It is ill with me when I begin to look which way the wind sets. Ten years ago, I literally did not know the point from the broad end of the vane, which it was that indicated the quarter. I hope these ill winds have blown *over* you as they do through me.

Kindest remembrances to you and yours. C. L.

So A. K. keeps a school; she teaches nothing wrong, I'll answer for 't. I have a Dutch print of a school-mistress; little old-fashioned Fleminglings, with only one face among them. She a princess of a school-mistress, wielding a rod for form more than use; the scene, an old monastic chapel, with a Madonna over her head, looking just as serious, as thoughtful, as pure, as gentle as herself. 'Tis a type of thy friend.

Yours, with kindest wishes to your daughter and friend, in which Mary joins, C. LAMB.

LETTER CCVII.] 1826.

Dear B. B.,—I don't know why I have delayed so long writing. 'Twas a fault. The under-current of excuse to my mind was that I had heard of the vessel in which Mitford's jars were to come; that it had

been obliged to put into Batavia to refit (which accounts for its delay), but was daily expected. Days are past, and it comes not, and the mermaids may be drinking their tea out of his china for aught I know; but let's hope not. In the meantime I have paid £28, &c. for the freight and prime cost, which I a little expected he would have settled in London. But do not mention it. I was enabled to do it by a receipt of £30 from Colburn, with whom, however, I have done. I should else have run short; for I only just make ends meet. We will wait the arrival of the trinkets, and to ascertain their full expense, and then bring in the bill. Don't mention it, for I dare say 'twas mere thoughtlessness. I am sorry you and yours have any plagues about dress matters. I have been sadly puzzled at the defalcation of more than one third of my income, out of which when entire I saved nothing.[1] But cropping of wine, old books, &c. &c., in short, all that can be called pocket-money, I hope to be able to go on at the cottage. Remember, I beg of you not to say any thing to Mitford, for if he be honest it will vex him: if not, which I as little expect as that you should be, I have a hank still upon the jars.

Colburn had something of mine in last month, which he has had in hand these seven months, and had lost, or couldn't find room for: I was used to different treatment in the *London*, and have forsworn periodicals. I am going thro' a course of reading at the Museum: the Garrick plays, out of part of which I formed my specimens. I have two thousand to go

[1] Lamb's income, when he retired, amounted to about £600. His pension was fixed at £450.—H.

thro'; and in a few weeks have despatched the tythe of 'em. It is a sort of office to me; hours, ten to four, the same. It does me good. Man must have regular occupation, that has been used to it.

Will you pardon my neglect? Mind, again I say, don't show this to M.; let me wait a little longer to know the event of his luxuries. I am sure he is a good fellow, tho' I made a serious Yorkshire lad stare when I said he was a clergyman. He is a pleasant layman spoiled. Heaven send him his jars uncrack'd, and me my ——

Yours, with kindest wishes to your daughter and friend, in which Mary joins,

C. L.

LETTER CCVIII. 1826.

Dear B. B., (the *Busy Bee*, as Hood after Dr. Watts apostrophizes thee, and well dost thou deserve it for thy labours in the Muses' gardens, wandering over parterres of Think-on-mes and Forget-me-nots, to a total impossibility of forgetting thee,) thy letter was acceptable, thy scruples may be dismissed, thou art *rectus in curiâ*, not a word more to be said, *verbum sapienti*, and so forth, the matter is decided with a white stone, classically, mark me, and the apparitions vanish'd which haunted me, only the cramp, Caliban's distemper, clawing me in the calvish part of my nature, makes me ever and anon roar bullishly, squeak cowardishly, and limp cripple-ishly. Do I write quakerly and simply, 'tis my most Master Mathews's like intention to do it. See Ben Jonson. —I think you told me your acquaintance with the Drama was confin'd to Shakspeare and Miss Baillie:

some read only Milton and Croly. The gap is as from an ananas to a turnip. I have fighting in my head the plots, characters, situations, and sentiments of 400 old plays (bran new to me) which I have been digesting at the Museum, and my appetite sharpens to twice as many more, which I mean to course over this Winter. I can scarce avoid dialogue fashion in this letter. I soliloquize my meditations, and habitually speak dramatic blank verse without meaning it. Do you see Mitford? He will tell you something of my labours. Tell him I am sorry to have missed seeing him, to have talked over those old Treasures. I am still more sorry for his missing Pots. But I shall be sure of the earliest intelligence of the Lost Tribes. His 'Sacred Specimens'[1] are a thankful addition to my shelves. Marry, I could wish he had been more careful of corrigenda. I have discover'd certain which have slipt his errata. I put 'em in the next page, as perhaps thou canst transmit them to him; for what purpose but to grieve him, (which yet I should be sorry to do,) but then it shows my learning, and the excuse is complimentary, as it implies their correction in a future edition. His own things in the book are magnificent, and as an old Christ's Hospitaller I was particularly refresh'd with his eulogy on our Edward. Many of the choice excerpta were new to me. Old Christmas is a coming, to the confusion of Puritans, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and that unwassailing crew. He cometh not with his wonted gait; he is shrunk nine inches in his girth, but is yet a lusty fellow. Hood's book[2] is

[1] Sacred Specimens selected from the early English Poets, 1827.—H

[2] The *Comic Annual*.—H.

mighty clever, and went off 600 copies the first day. Sion's Songs do not disperse so quickly. The next leaf is for Rev. J. M. In this adieu, thine briefly, in a tall friendship,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCIX.] June 11th, 1827.

Dear B. B.,—Martin's "Belshazzar" (the picture) I have seen. Its architectural effect is stupendous; but the human figures, the squalling contorted little antics that are playing at being frightened, like children at a sham ghost, who half know it to be a mask, are detestable. Then the *letters* are nothing more than a transparency lighted up, such as a Lord might order to be lit up on a sudden at a Christmas gambol, to scare the ladies.[1] The *type* is as plain as Baskerville's: they should have been dim, full of mystery, letters to the mind rather than the eye.

Rembrandt has painted only Belshazzar and a courtier or two, (taking a part of the banquet for the whole,) not fribbled out a mob of fine folks. Then every thing is so distinct, to the very necklaces, and that foolish little prophet. What *one* point is there of interest? The ideal of such a subject is, that you the spectator should see nothing but what at the time you would have seen,—the *hand*, and the *King*, —not to be at leisure to make tailor-remarks on the dresses, or, Dr. Kitchener-like, to examine the good things at table.

[1] The reader will find in the Essay on "The Deficiency of Imagination," &c., what a new and quaint shape was found for this idea.—F.

Just such a confused piece is his "Joshua," frittered into a thousand fragments, little armies here, little armies there—you should see only the *Sun* and *Joshua*. If I remember, he has not left out that luminary entirely; but for Joshua, I was ten minutes a finding him out. Still he is showy in all that is not the human figure or the preternatural interest: but the first are below a drawing-school girl's attainment, and the last is a phantasmagoric trick,—"Now you shall see what you shall see, dare is Balshazar and dare is Daniel."

You have my thoughts of M., and so adieu!

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCX.] August 10, 1827.

Dear B. B.,—I have not been able to answer you, for we have had and are having (I just snatch a moment) our poor quiet retreat, to which we fled from society, full of company—some staying with us; and this moment, as I write, almost, a heavy importation of two old ladies has come in. Whither can I take wing from the oppression of human faces? Would I were in a wilderness of apes, tossing cocoa-nuts about, grinning and grinned at!

Mitford was hoaxing you, surely, about my engraving; 'tis a little sixpenny thing,[1] too like by half,

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1 "There was a caricature of him (Lamb) sold in the shops, which pretended to be a likeness. Procter went into the shop in a passion, and asked the man what he meant by putting forth such a libel. The man apologised, and said that the artist meant no offence."—Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography*, ed. 1860, p. 274.—H.

in which the draughtsman has done his best to avoid flattery. There have been two editions of it, which I think are all gone, as they have vanished from the window where they hung—a print-shop, corner of Great and Little Queen Streets, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where any London friend of yours may inquire for it; for I am (though you *won't understand it*) at Enfield Chase, (Mrs. Leishman's). We have been here near three months, and shall stay two more, if people will let us alone; but they persecute us from village to village. So, don't direct to *Islington* again, till further notice. I am trying my hand at a drama, in two acts, founded on Crabbe's "Confidant," *mutatis mutandis*. You like the Odyssey. Did you ever read my "Adventures of Ulysses," founded on Chapman's old translation of it? For children or men Chapman is divine, and my abridgment has not quite emptied him of his divinity. When you come to town I'll show it to you. You have well described your old-fashioned grand paternal hall. Is it not odd that every one's earliest recollections are of some such place! I had my Blakesware (Blakesmoor in the *London*). Nothing fills a child's mind like a large old mansion; better if un—or partially—occupied; peopled with the spirits of deceased members of the county and justices of the quorum. Would I were buried in the peopled solitudes of one, with my feelings at seven years old! Those marble busts of the emperors, they seemed as if they were to stand for ever, as they had stood from the living days of Rome, in that old marble hall, and I to partake of their permanency. Eternity was, while I thought not of Time. But he thought of me, and they are toppled down, and corn covers the spot of the noble old

dwelling and its princely gardens. I feel like a grasshopper that, chirping about the grounds, escaped his scythe only by my littleness. Even now he is whetting one of his smallest razors to clean wipe me out, perhaps. Well!

LETTER CCXI.] August 24th, 1827.

Dear B. B.,—I am thankful to you for your ready compliance with my wishes. Emma is delighted with your verses, to which I have appended this notice, "The sixth line refers to the child of a dear friend of the author's, named Emma," without which it must be obscure, and have sent it with four album poems of my own (your daughter's with your heading, requesting it a place next mine,) to a Mr. Fraser, who is to be editor of a more superb pocket-book than has yet appeared, by far! the property of some wealthy booksellers; but whom, or what its name, I forgot to ask. It is actually to have in it schoolboy exercises by his present Majesty and the late Duke of York. So Lucy will come to Court; how she will be stared at! Wordsworth is named as a contributor. Fraser, whom I have slightly seen, is editor of a forthcome or coming review of foreign books, and is intimately connected with Lockhart, &c. So I take it that this is a concern of Murray's. Walter Scott also contributes mainly. I have stood off a long time from these annuals, which are ostentatious trumpery, but could not withstand the request of Jameson, a particular friend of mine and Coleridge.

I shall hate myself in frippery, strutting along, and vying finery with beaux and belles, with "future Lord Byrons and sweet L. E. Ls." Your taste, I see, is less simple than mine, which the difference in our persuasions has doubtless effected. In fact, of late you have so Frenchified your style, larding it with *hors de combat*, and *au desopoirs*, that o' my conscience the Foxian blood is quite dried out of you, and the skipping Monsieur spirit has been infused. Doth Lucy go to balls? I must remodel my lines, which I wrote for her. I hope A. K. keeps to her primitives.

If you have any thing you'd like to send further, I dare say an honourable place would be given to it; but I have not heard from Fraser since I sent mine, nor shall probably again, and therefore I do not solicit it as from him. Yesterday I sent off my tragi-comedy to Mr. Kemble. Wish it luck. I made it all ('tis blank verse, and I think of the true old dramatic cut) or most of it in the green lanes about Enfield, where I am, and mean to remain, in spite of your peremptory doubts on that head. Your refusal to lend your poetical sanction to my "Icon," and your reasons to Evans, are most sensible. Maybe I may hit on a line or two of my own jocular; maybe not. Do you never Londonize again? I should like to talk over old poetry with you, of which I have much, and you, I think, little. Do your Drummonds allow no holidays? I would willingly come and work for you a three weeks or so, to let you loose. Would I could sell or give you some of my leisure! Positively, the best thing a man can have to do is nothing, and next to that perhaps—good works. I am but poorlyish, and feel myself writing a dull

letter; poorlyish from company; not generally, for I never was better, nor took more walks, fourteen miles a day on an average, with a sporting dog, Dash. You would not know the plain poet, any more than he doth recognise James Nayler trick'd out *au deserpoy* (how do you spell it?) *En passant, J'ai me entendre de mon bon homme sur surveillance de croix, ma pas l'homme figuratif.* Do you understand me?

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXII.] Dec. 4th, 1827.

My dear B. B.,—I have scarce spirits to write, yet am harassed with not writing. Nine weeks are completed, and Mary does not get any better. It is perfectly exhausting. Enfield, and everything, is very gloomy. But for long experience I should fear her ever getting well. I feel most thankful for the spinsterly attentions of your sister. Thank the kind "knitter in the sun!" What nonsense seems verse, when one is seriously out of hope and spirits! I mean, that at this time I have some nonsense to write, under pain of incivility. Would to the fifth heaven no coxcombess had invented Albums!

I have not had a Bijoux, nor the slightest notice from Pickering about omitting four out of five of my things. The best thing is never to hear of such a thing as a bookseller again, or to think there are publishers. Second-hand stationers and old book-stalls for me. Authorship should be an idea of the past. Old kings, old bishops, are venerable; all present is

hollow. I cannot make a letter. I have no straw, not a pennyworth of chaff, only this may stop your kind importunity to know about us. Here is a comfortable house, but no tenants. One does not make a household. Do not think I am quite in despair; but, in addition to hope protracted, I have a stupifying cold and obstructing headache, and the sun is dead.

I will not fail to apprise you of the revival of a beam. Meantime accept this, rather than think I have forgotten you all. Best remembrances.

Yours and theirs truly, C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXIII.] 1827.

My dear B. B.,—You will understand my silence when I tell you that my sister, on the very eve of entering into a new house we have taken at Enfield, was surprised with an attack of one of her sad long illnesses, which deprive me of her society, though not of her domestication, for eight or nine weeks together. I see her, but it does her no good. But for this, we have the snuggest, most comfortable house, with every thing most compact and desirable. Colebrook is a wilderness. The books, prints, &c., are come here, and the New River came down with us. The familiar prints, the bust, the Milton, seem scarce to have changed their rooms. One of her last observations was "How frightfully like this room is to our room in Islington!"—our up-stairs room, she meant. How I hope you will come some better day, and judge of it! We have tried quiet here for four months, and I will answer for the comfort of it enduring.

On emptying my bookshelves I found an Ulysses, which I will send to A. K. when I go to town, for her acceptance—unless the book be out of print. One likes to have one copy of every thing one does. I neglected to keep one of "Poetry for Children," the joint production of Mary and me, and it is not to be had for love or money. It had in the title-page "by the Author of Mrs. Lester's School." Know you any one that has it, and would exchange it?

Strolling to Waltham Cross the other day, I hit off these lines. It is one of the crosses which Edward I. caused to be built for his wife at every town where her corpse rested between Northamptonshire and London:—

A stately cross each sad spot doth attest,
Whereat the corpse of Eleanor did rest,
From Herdby fetch'd—her spouse so honour'd her—
To sleep with royal dust at Westminster.
And, if less pompous obsequies were thine,
Duke Brunswick's daughter, princely Caroline,
Grudge not, great ghost, nor count thy funeral losses:
Thou in thy life-time had'st thy share of crosses.

My dear B.,—My head aches with this little excursion. Pray accept two sides for three for once, and believe me yours sadly, C. L.

Chase Side, Enfield.

LETTER CCXIV.] 1827.

My dear B.,—We are all pretty well again and comfortable, and I take a first opportunity of sending the "Adventures of Ulysses," hoping that among us—Homer, Chapman, and Co.—we shall afford you some pleasure. I fear it is out of print; if not, A. K. will

accept it, with wishes it were bigger; if another copy is not to be had, it reverts to me and my heirs *for ever.* With it I send a trumpery book; to which, without my knowledge the editor of the Bijoux has contributed Lucy's verses: I am ashamed to ask her acceptance of the trash accompanying it. Adieu to Albums—for a great while—I said when I came here, and had not been fixed for two days; but my landlord's daughter (not at the Pot house) requested me to write in her female friends' and in her own. If I go to —— thou art there also, O all pervading Album! All over the Leeward Islands, in Newfoundland, and the Back Settlements, I understand there is no other reading. They haunt me. I die of Albophobia!

C. L.

LETTER CCXV.] 1827.

My dear B. B.,—A gentleman I never saw before brought me your welcome present. Imagine a scraping, fiddling, fidgeting, petit-maître of a dancing school advancing into my plain parlour with a coupée and a sideling bow, and presenting the book as if he had been handing a glass of lemonade to a young miss: imagine this, and contrast it with the serious nature of the book presented! Then task your imagination, reversing this picture, to conceive of quite an opposite messenger, a lean, strait-locked, whey-faced Methodist, for such was he in reality who brought it, the Genius (it seems) of the Wesleyan Magazine. Certes, friend B., thy Widow's Tale is too horrible, spite of the lenitives of Religion, to embody in verse; I hold prose to be the appropriate expositor of such atrocities! No offence, but it is a

cordial that makes the heart sick. Still thy skill in compounding it I do not deny. I turn to what gave me less mingled pleasure. I find mark'd with pencil these pages in thy pretty book, and fear I have been penurious :—

Page 52, 53—Capital.
" 59—6th stanza, exquisite simile.
" 61—11th stanza, equally good.
" 108—3rd stanza, I long to see Van Balen.
" 111—A downright good sonnet. *Dixi.*
" 153—Lines at the bottom.

So you see, I read, hear, and *mark*, if I don't learn. In short, this little volume is no discredit to any of your former, and betrays none of the senility you fear about. *Apropos* of Van Balen, an artist who painted me lately, had painted a blackamoor praying, and not filling his canvas, stuffed in his little girl aside of blackey, gaping at him unmeaningly; and then didn't know what to call it. Now for a picture to be promoted to the Exhibition (Suffolk Street) as *Historical*, a subject is requisite. What does me? I but christened it the "Young Catechist" and furbish'd it with dialogue following, which dubb'd it an Historical Painting. Nothing to a friend at need.

"While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,
Painter, who is she that stayeth
By, with skin of whitest lustre;
Sunny locks, a shining cluster;
Saint-like seeming to direct him
To the Power that must protect him?
Is she of the heav'n-born Three,
Meek Hope, strong Faith, sweet Charity?
Or some Cherub?

They you mention
Far transcend my weak invention.
'Tis a simple Christian child,
Missionary young and mild,
From her store of Script'ral knowledge,
(Bible-taught, without a college,)
Which by reading she could gather,
Teaches him to say Our Father
To the common Parent, who
Colour not respects, nor hue.
White and black in Him have part,
Who looks not to the skin, but heart."

When I'd done it, the artist (who had clapt in Miss merely as a fill-space) swore I exprest his full meaning, and the damosel bridled up into a missionary's vanity. I like verses to explain pictures; seldom pictures to illustrate poems. Your woodcut is a rueful lignum mortis. By the by, is the widow likely to marry again?

I am giving the fruit of my old play reading at the Museum to Hone,[1] who sets forth a portion weekly in the *Table Book*. Do you see it? How is Mitford? —I'll just hint that the pitcher, the chord, and the bowl are a little too often repeated (passim) in your book, and that in page 17, last line but 4, *him* is put for *he;* but the poor widow I take it had small leisure for grammatical niceties. Don't you see there's *he, myself,* and *him;* why not both *him?* likewise *imperviously* is cruelly spelt *imperiously*. These are trifles, and I honestly like your book, and you for giving it, though I really am ashamed of so many presents. I can think of no news; therefore I will end with mine and Mary's kindest remembrances to you and yours. C. L.

[1] The Extracts from the Garrick plays, published in the *Table Book*.—H.

LETTER CCXVI.] [April 21st, 1828.]

Dear B. B.,—You must excuse my silence. I have been in very poor health and spirits, and cannot write letters. I only write to assure you, as you wish'd, of my existence. All that which Mitford tells you of His book is rhodomontade, only H. has written unguardedly about me, and nothing makes a man more foolish than his own foolish panegyric. But I am pretty well used to flattery, and its contrary. Neither affects me a turnip's worth. Do you see the author of "May you like it?" Do you write to him? Will you give my present plea to him of ill health for not acknowledging a pretty book with a pretty frontispiece he sent me. He is most esteemed by me. As for subscribing to books, in plain truth I am a man of reduced income, and don't allow myself 12 shillings a-year to buy old books with; which must be my excuse. I am truly sorry for Murray's demur; but I wash my hands of all booksellers, and hope to know them no more. I am sick and poorly, and must leave off with our joint kind remembrances to your daughter and friend A. K.

LETTER CCXVII.] Oct. 11th, 1828.

A splendid edition of "Bunyan's Pilgrim!" Why, the thought is enough to turn one's moral stomach. His cockle-hat and staff transformed to a smart cock'd beaver and a jemmy cane; his amice grey, to the last Regent Street cut; and his painful palmer's pace

to the modern swagger. Stop thy friend's sacrilegious hand. Nothing can be done for B. but to reprint the old cuts in as homely but good a style as possible The Vanity Fair, and the Pilgrims there—the Silly-soothness in his setting-out countenance—the Christian Idiocy (in a good sense) of his admiration of the shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; the lions, so truly allegorical, and remote from any similitude to Pidcock's; the great head (the author's), capacious of dreams and similitudes, dreaming in the dungeon. Perhaps you don't know my edition, what I had when a child. If you do, can you bear new designs from Martin, enamelled into copper or silver plate by Heath, accompanied with verses from Mrs. Hemans's pen, O how unlike his own!

"Wouldst thou divert thyself from melancholy?
Wouldst thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly?
Wouldst thou read riddles, and their explanation
Or else be drown'd in thy contemplation?
Dost thou love picking meat? or wouldst thou see
A man in the clouds, and hear him speak to thee?
Wouldst thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?
Or wouldst thou in a moment laugh and weep?
Or wouldst thou lose thyself, and catch no harm,
And find thyself again without a charm?
Wouldst read *thyself*, and read thou knowest not what,
And yet know whether thou art blest or not
By reading the same lines? O then come hither,
And lay my book, thy head, and heart together.
"JOHN BUNYAN."

Show me such poetry in any one of the fifteen forthcoming combinations of show and emptiness, yclept "Annuals." So there's verses for thy verses; and now let me tell you, that the sight of your hand gladdened me. I have been daily trying to write to you.

but paralysed. You have spurred me on this tiny effort, and at intervals I hope to hear from and talk to you. But my spirits have been in an opprest way for a long long time, and they are things which must be to you of faith, for who can explain depression? Yes, I am hooked into the "Gem," but only for some lines written on a dead infant of the Editor's, which being, as it were, his property, I could not refuse their appearing; but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss, the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in first page, and whistled through all the covers of magazines, the barefaced sort of emulation, the immodest candidateship. Brought into so little space—in those old "Londons," a signature was lost in the wood of matter, the paper coarse (till latterly, which spoiled them); in short, I detest to appear in an Annual. What a fertile genius (and a quiet good soul withal) is Hood! He has fifty things in hand: farces to supply the Adelphi for the season; a comedy for one of the great theatres, just ready; a whole entertainment, by himself, for Mathews and Yates to figure in; a meditated Comic Annual for next year, to be nearly done by himself. You'd like him very much.

Wordsworth, I see, has a good many pieces announced in one of 'em, not our Gem. W. Scott has distributed himself like a bribe haunch among 'em. Of all the poets, Cary has had the good sense to keep quite clear of 'em, with clergy-gentlemanly right notions. Don't think I set up for being proud on this point; I like a bit of flattery, tickling my vanity, as well as any one. But these pompous masquerades without masks (naked names or faces) I hate. So there's a bit of my mind. Besides, they infallibly cheat

you; I mean the booksellers. If I get but a copy, I only expect it from Hood's being my friend. Coleridge has lately been here. He too is deep among the prophets, the year-servers,—the mob of gentlemen annuals. But they'll cheat him, I know. And now, dear B. B., the sun shining out merrily, and the dirty clouds we had yesterday having washed their own faces clean with their own rain, tempts me to wander up Winchmore Hill, or into some of the delightful vicinages of Enfield, which I hope to show you at some time when you can get a few days up to the great town. Believe me, it would give both of us great pleasure to show you all three (we can lodge you) our pleasant farms and villages.

We both join in kindest loves to you and yours.

C. LAMB, *redivivus*.

LETTER CCXVIII.] Dec. 5th, 1828.

Dear B. B.,—I am ashamed to receive so many nice books from you, and to have none to send you in return. You are always sending me some fruits or wholesome potherbs, and mine is the garden of the Sluggard, nothing but weeds, or scarce they. Nevertheless, if I knew how to transmit it, I would send you Blackwood's of this month, which contains a little drama, to have your opinion of it, and how far I have improved, or otherwise, upon its prototype. Thank you for your kind sonnet. It does me good to see the Dedication to a Christian Bishop. I am for a comprehension, as divines call it; but so as that the Church shall go a good deal more than half way over to the silent Meeting-house. I have ever

said that the Quakers are the only *professors* of Christianity as I read it in the Evangiles. I say *professors:* marry, as to practice, with their gaudy hot types and poetical vanities, they are much as one with the sinful. Martin's Frontispiece is a very fine thing, let *C. L.* say what he pleases to the contrary. Of the Poems, I like them as a volume, better than any one of the preceding; particularly, "Power and Gentleness"—"The Present"—"Lady Russell;" with the exception that I do not like the noble act of Curtius, true or false—one of the grand foundations of the old Roman patriotism—to be sacrificed to Lady R.'s taking notes on her husband's trial. If a thing is good, why invidiously bring it into light with something better? There are too few heroic things in this world, to admit of our marshalling them in anxious etiquettes of precedence. Would you make a poem on the story of Ruth, (pretty story!) and then say—Ay, but how much better is the story of Joseph and his brethren! To go on, the stanzas to "Chalon" want the *name* of Clarkson in the body of them; it is left to inference. The "Battle of Gibeon" is spirited, again; but you sacrifice it in the last stanza to the song at Bethlehem. Is it quite orthodox to do so? The first was good, you suppose, for that dispensation. Why set the word against the word? It puzzles a weak Christian. So Watts's Psalms are an implied censure on David's. But as long as the Old Testament is supposed to be an equally divine emanation with the New Testament, so long it will stagger weaklings to have them set in opposition. "Godiva" is delicately touched. I have always thought it a beautiful story, characteristic of the old English times. But I could not help amusing myself

with the thought—if Martin had chosen this subject for a frontispiece—there would have been in some dark corner a white lady, white as the walker on the waves, riding upon some mystical quadruped; and high above would have risen "tower above tower a massy structure high"—the Tenterden steeples of Coventry, till the poor cross would scarce have known itself among the clouds; and far above them all the distant Clint hills peering over chimney-pots, piled up, Ossa-on-Olympus fashion, till the admiring spectator (admirer of a noble deed) might have gone look for the lady, as you must hunt for the other in the lobster. But M[artin] should be made royal architect. What palaces he would pile! But then, what parliamentary grants to make them good! Nevertheless, I like the frontispiece. "The Elephant" is pleasant; and I am glad you are getting into a wider scope of subjects. There may be too much, not religion, but too many *good words* in a book, till it becomes, as Sh[elley] says of Religion, a rhapsody of words. I will just name, that you have brought in the "Song to the Shepherds" in four or five, if not six places. Now this is not good economy. The "Enoch" is fine; and here I can sacrifice "Elijah" to it, because 'tis illustrative only, and not disparaging of the latter prophet's departure. I like this best in the book. Lastly, I much like the "Heron;" 'tis exquisite. Know you Lord Thurlow's Sonnet to a bird of that sort on Lacken water? If not, 'tis indispensable I send it you, with my Blackwood, if you tell me how best to send them. "Fludyer" is pleasant,—you are getting gay and Hoodish. What is the enigma? Money? If not, I fairly confess I am foiled, and sphynx must . . . . .

eat me. Four times I've tried to write eat me, and the blotting pen turns it into cat me. And now I will take my leave with saying, I esteem thy verses, like thy present, honour thy frontispicer, and right reverence thy patron and dedicatee, and am, dear B. B.,

Yours heartily,

C. LAMB.

Our joint kindest loves to A. K. and your daughter.

LETTER CCXIX.] March 25th, 1829.

Dear B. B.,—I send you by desire Darley's very poetical poem. You will like, I think, the novel headings of each scene. Scenical directions in verse are novelties. With it I send a few *duplicates*, which are *therefore* of no value to me; and may amuse an idle hour. Read "Christmas:" 'tis the production of a young author, who reads all your writings. A good word from you about his little book would be as balm to him. It has no pretensions, and makes none. But parts are pretty. In Field's Appendix turn to a poem called the Kangaroo. It is in the best way of our old poets, if I mistake not. I have just come from town, where I have been to get my bit of quarterly pension; and have brought home, from stalls in Barbican, the old "Pilgrim's Progress" with the prints—Vanity Fair, &c.—now scarce. Four shillings. Cheap. And also one of whom I have oft heard and had dreams, but never saw in the flesh—

that is in sheepskin—"The whole theologic works of Thomas Aquinas."

My arms ached with lugging it a mile to the stage; but the burden was a pleasure, such as old Anchises was to the shoulders of Æneas, or the Lady to the Lover in old romance, who having to carry her to the top of a high mountain, (the price of obtaining her,) clambered with her to the top, and fell dead with fatigue.

"Oh the glorious old Schoolmen!"

There must be something in him. Such great names imply greatness. Who hath seen Michael Angelo's things—of us that never pilgrimaged to Rome—and yet which of us disbelieves his greatness? How I will revel in his cobwebs and subtleties, till my brain spins!

N.B. I have writ in the old Hamlet: offer it to Mitford in my name, if he have not seen it. 'Tis woefully below our editions of it. But keep it, if you like. (What is M. to me?)

I do not mean this to go for a letter, only to apprise you that the parcel is booked for you this 25th March, 1829, from the Four Swans, Bishopsgate. With both our loves to Lucy and A. K. Yours ever, C. L.

LETTER CCXX.] June 3rd, 1829.

Dear B. B.,—To get out of home themes, have you seen Southey's Dialogues? His lake descriptions, and the account of his library at Keswick, are very

fine. But he needed not to have called up the ghost of More to hold the conversations with; which might as well have passed between A. and B, or Caius and Lucius. It is making too free with a defunct Chancellor and Martyr.

I feel as if I had nothing farther to write about. O I forget the prettiest letter I ever read, that I have received from "Pleasures of Memory" Rogers, in acknowledgment of a sonnet I sent him on the loss of his brother.

It is too long to transcribe, but I hope to show it you some day, as I hope some time again to see you, when all of us are well. Only it ends thus: "We were nearly of an age; he was the elder. He was the only person in the world in whose eyes I always appeared young." I will now take my leave with assuring you that I am most interested in hoping to hear favourable accounts from you. With kindest regards to A. K. and you, Yours truly, C. L.

LETTER CCXXI.] July 3rd, 1829.

Dear B. B.,—I am very much grieved indeed for the indisposition of poor Lucy. Your letter found me in domestic troubles. My sister is again taken ill, and I am obliged to remove her out of the house for many weeks, I fear, before I can hope to have her again. I have been very desolate indeed. My loneliness is a little abated by our young friend Emma having just come here for her holidays, and a schoolfellow of hers that was, with her. Still the house is not the same, though she is the same. Mary had been pleasing herself with the prospect of

seeing her at this time; and with all their company, the house feels at times a frightful solitude. May you and I in no very long time have a more cheerful theme to write about, and congratulate upon a daughter's and a sister's perfect recovery. Do not be long without telling me how Lucy goes on. I have a right to call her by her quaker-name, you know. Emma knows that I am writing to you, and begs to be remembered to you with thankfulness for your ready contribution. Her album is filling apace. But of her contributors, one, almost the flower of it, a most amiable young man and late acquaintance of mine, has been carried off by consumption, on return from one of the Azores islands, to which he went with hopes of mastering the disease, came back improved, went back to a most close and confined counting-house, and relapsed. His name was Dibdin, grandson of the songster.

C. L.

Enfield Chase Side, Saturday 25th July,

LETTER CCXXII.] A.D. 1829, 11 A.M.

There!—a fuller, plumper, juicier date never dropt from Idumean palm. Am I in the *date*-ive case now? If not, a fig for dates, which is more than a date is worth. I never stood much affected to these limitary specialities; least of all, since the date of my superannuation.

"What have I with time to do?
Slaves of desks, 'twas meant for you."

Dear B. B.,—Your handwriting has conveyed much pleasure to me in respects of Lucy's restoration. Would I could send you as good news of my poor Lucy. But some wearisome weeks I must remain lonely yet. I have had the loneliest time, near ten weeks, broken by a short apparition of Emma for her holidays, whose departure only deepened the returning solitude, and by ten days I have past in town. But town, with all my native hankering after it, is not what it was. . The streets, the shops are left; but all old friends are gone! And in London I was frightfully convinced of this as I passed houses and places, empty caskets now. I have ceased to care almost about any body. The bodies I cared for are in graves, or dispersed. My old clubs, that lived so long and flourished so steadily, are crumbled away. When I took leave of our adopted young friend at Charing Cross, 'twas heavy unfeeling rain, and I had no where to go. Home have I none, and not a sympathizing house to turn to in the great city. Never did the waters of heaven pour down on a forlorner head. Yet I tried ten days at a sort of friend's house, but it was large and straggling,—one of the individuals of my old long knot of friends, card-players, pleasant companions, that have tumbled to pieces, into dust and other things; and I got home on Thursday, convinced that I was better to get home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat in my corner. Less than a month I hope will bring home Mary. She is at Fulham, looking better in her health than ever, but sadly rambling, and scarce showing any pleasure in seeing me, or curiosity when I should come again. But the old feelings will come back again, and we shall drown old sorrows over a game of picquet again.

But 'tis a tedious cut out of a life of 54, to lose 12 or 13 weeks every year or two. And to make me more alone, our ill-tempered maid is gone, who, with all her airs, was yet a home-piece of furniture, a record of better days. The young thing that has succeeded her is good and attentive, but she is nothing. And I have no one here to talk over old matters with. Scolding and quarrelling have some thing of familiarity, and a community of interest; they imply acquaintance; they are of resentment, which is of the family of dearness.

I can neither scold nor quarrel at this insignificant implement of household services; she is less than a cat, and just better than a deal dresser. What I can do, and do over-do, is to walk; but deadly long are the days, these Summer all-day days, with but a half hour's candle-light, and no fire-light. I do not write, tell your kind inquisitive Eliza, and can hardly read. In the ensuing *Blackwood* will be an old rejected farce of mine, which may be new to you, if you see that same medley. What things are all the magazines now! I contrive studiously not to see them. The popular *New Monthly* is perfect trash. Poor Hessey, I suppose you see, has failed; Hunt and Clarke too. Your "Vulgar Truths" will be a good name; and I think your prose must please—me at least. But 'tis useless to write poetry with no purchasers. 'Tis cold work authorship, without some thing to puff one into fashion. Could you not write something on Quakerism, for Quakers to read, but nominally addressed to Non-Quakers, explaining your dogmas—waiting on the Spirit—by the analogy of human calmness and patient waiting on the judgment? I scarcely know what I mean, but to make

Non-Quakers reconciled to your doctrines, by showing something like them in mere human operations; but I hardly understand myself; so let it pass for nothing. I pity you for over-work; but I assure you, no work is worse. The mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome food. I bragged formerly that I could not have too much time. I have now a surfeit. With few years to come, the days are wearisome. But weariness is not eternal. Something will shine out to take the load off that flags me, which is at present intolerable. I have killed an hour or two in this poor scrawl. I am a sanguinary murderer of time, and would kill him inch-meal just now. But the snake is vital. Well: I shall write merrier anon. 'Tis the present copy of my countenance I send, and to complain is a little to alleviate. May you enjoy yourself as far as the wicked world will let you, and think that you are not quite alone as I am! Health to Lucia, and to Anna, and kind remembrances.

Your forlorn, C. L.

LETTER CCXXIII.] December 8th, 1829.

My dear B. B.,—You are very good to have been uneasy about us, and I have the satisfaction to tell you that we are both in better health and spirits than we have been for a year or two past; I may say than we have been since we have been at Enfield. The cause may not appear quite adequate, when I tell you that a course of ill-health and spirits brought us to the determination of giving up our house here, and we are boarding and lodging with a worthy old

couple, long inhabitants of Enfield, where every thing is done for us without trouble, further than a reasonable weekly payment. We should have done so before, but it is not easy to flesh and blood to give up an ancient establishment, to discard old Penates, and from house keepers to turn house sharers. (N.B. We are not in the workhouse.) Diocletian, in his garden, found more repose than on the imperial seat of Rome; and the nob of Charles the Fifth ached seldomer under a monk's cowl than under the diadem. With such shadows of assimilation we countenance our degradation. With such a load of dignified cares just removed from our shoulders, we can the more understand and pity the accession to yours, by the advancement to an assigneeship. I will tell you honestly, B. B., that it has been long my deliberate judgment that all bankrupts, of whatsoever denomination, civil or religious, ought to be hanged. The pity of mankind has for ages run in a wrong channel, and has been diverted from poor creditors—(how many I have known sufferers! Hazlitt has just been defrauded of £100 by his bookseller-friends breaking[1])—to scoundrel debtors. I know all the topics—that distress may come upon an honest man without his fault; that the failure of one that he trusted was his calamity, &c. Then let *both* be hanged. O how careful this would make traders! These are my deliberate thoughts, after many years' experience in matters of trade. What a world of trouble it would have saved you, if Friend * * * * had been immediately hanged, without

[1] Messrs. Hunt and Clarke. The sum was £500, which Mr. Hazlitt was to have received for his *Life of Napoleon*. He received bills, which were dishonoured.—H.

benefit of clergy, which (being a Quaker I presume) he could not reasonably insist upon. Why, after slaving twelve months in your assign-business, you will be enabled to declare *7d.* in the pound in all human probability. B. B., he should be *hanged.* Trade will never re-flourish in this land till such a law is established. I write big, not to save ink but eyes, mine having been troubled with reading through three folios of old Fuller in almost as few days, and I went to bed last night in agony, and am writing with a vial of eye-water before me, alternately dipping in vial and inkstand. This may inflame my zeal against bankrupts, but it was my speculation when I could see better. Half the world's misery (Eden else) is owing to want of money, and all that want is owing to bankrupts. I declare I would, if the state wanted practitioners, turn hangman myself, and should have great pleasure in hanging the first bankrupt after my salutary law had been established. I have seen no Annuals, and wish to see none. I like your fun upon them, and was quite pleased with Bowles's sonnet. Hood is, or was, at Brighton; but a note (prose or rhyme) to him, Robert Street, Adelphi, I am sure, would extract a copy of *his*, which also I have not seen. Wishing you and yours all health, I conclude while these frail glasses are to me—eyes.

C. L.

LETTER CCXXIV.] June 28, 1830.

Dear B. B.,—Could you dream of my publishing without sending a copy to you? You will find something new to you in the volume, particularly the trans-

lations. Moxon will send to you the moment it is out. He is the young poet of Christmas, whom the Author of the "Pleasures of Memory" has set up in the book-vending business with a volunteer'd loan of £500. Such munificence is rare to an almost stranger; but Rogers, I am told, has done many good-natured things of this kind.

I need not say how glad to see A. K. and Lucy we should have been,—and still shall be, if it be practicable. Our direction is Mr. Westwood's, Chase Side Enfield; but alas I know not theirs. We can give them a bed. Coaches come daily from the Bell, Holborn.

You will see that I am worn to the poetical dregs, condescending to acrostics, which are nine fathom beneath album verses; but they were written at the request of the lady where our Emma is, to whom I paid a visit in April to bring home Emma for a change of air, after a severe illness, in which she had been treated like a daughter by the good Parson and his whole family. She has since returned to her occupation. I thought on you in Suffolk, but was forty miles from Woodbridge. I heard of you the other day from Mr. Pulham of the India House.

Long live King William the IVth!

S. T. C. says we have had wicked kings, foolish kings, wise kings, (but few,) but never till now have we had a blackguard king.

Charles the Second was profligate, but a gentleman.

I have nineteen letters to dispatch this leisure Sabbath for Moxon to send with copies; so you will forgive me short measure, and believe me,

Yours ever, C. L.

Pray do let us see your Quakeresses if possible.

LETTER CCXXV.] Feb. 25, 1830.

Dear B. B.,—To reply to you by return of post, I must gobble up my dinner and despatch this *in propriâ personâ* to the office, to be in time. So take it from me hastily, that you are perfectly welcome to furnish A. C. with the scrap, which I had almost forgotten writing. The more my character comes to be known, the less my veracity will come to be suspected. Time every day clears up some suspected narrative of Herodotus, Bruce, and others of us great travellers. Why, that Joseph Paice[1] was as real a person as Joseph Hume, and a great deal pleasanter. A careful observer of life, Bernard, has no need to invent. Nature romances it for him. Dinner plates rattle, and I positively shall incur indigestion by carrying it half concocted to the post-house. Let me congratulate you on the Spring coming in, and do you in return condole with me on the Winter going out. When the old one goes, seldom comes a better. I dread the prospect of Summer, with his all-day-long days. No need of his assistance to make country places dull. With fire and candle-light I can dream myself in Holborn. With lightsome skies shining in to bed-time I can not. This Mesech, and these tents of Kedar—I would dwell in the skirts of Jericho rather, and think every blast of the coming in mail a ram's horn. Give me old London at fire and plague times, rather than these tepid gales, healthy country air, and purposeless exercise.

[1] Mr. Paice was a merchant on Bread Street Hill, and a Director of the South Sea Company. He was an acquaintance and Correspondent of John Wilkes.—H.

Leg of mutton absolutely on the table.
Take our hasty loves and short farewell.

C. L.

LETTER CCXXVI.] August 30th, 1830.

Dear B. B.,—My address is 34, Southampton Buildings, Holborn. For God's sake do not let me be pester'd with Annuals. They are all rogues who edit them, and something else who write in them. I am still alone, and very much out of sorts, and cannot spur up my mind to writing. The sight of one of those year books makes me sick. I get nothing by any of 'em, not even a copy.

Thank you for your warm interest about my little volume, for the critics on which I care the five hundred thousandth part of the tythe of a half-farthing. I am too old a Militant for that. How noble, tho', in Robert Southey to come forward for an old friend, who had treated him so unworthily!

Moxon has a shop without customers, I a book without readers. But what a clamour against a poor collection of Album verses, as if we had put forth an Epic! I cannot scribble a long letter: I am, when not at foot, very desolate, and take no interest in any thing, scarce hate any thing but Annuals. I am in an interregnum of thought and feeling. What a beautiful Autumn morning this is, if it was but with me as in times past when the candle of the Lord shined round me! I cannot even muster enthusiasm to admire the French heroism. In better times I hope we may some day meet, and discuss an old

poem or two. But if you'd have me not sick, no more of Annuals.

C. L., Ex-Elia.

Love to Lucy and A. K. always.

LETTER CCXXVII.] April, 1831.

Vir Bone!—Recepi literas tuas amicissimas, et in mentem venit responsuro mihi, vel raro, vel nunquam, inter nos intercedisse Latinam linguam, organum rescribendi, loquendive. Epistolæ tuæ, Plinianis elegantiis (supra quod TREMULO deceat) refertæ, tam a verbis Plinianis adeo abhorrent, ut ne vocem quamquam (Romanam scilicet) habere videaris, quam "ad canem," ut aiunt, "rejectare possis." Forsan desuetudo Latinissandi ad vernaculam linguam usitandam, plusquam opus sit, coegit. Per adagia quædam nota, et in ore omnium pervulgata, ad Latinitatis perditæ recuperationem revocare te institui.

Felis in abaco est, et ægrè videt.

Omne quod splendet nequaquam aurum putes.

Imponas equo mendicum, equitabit idem ad diabolum.

Fur commodè a fure prenditur.

O MARIA, MARIA, valdè CONTRARIA, quomodo crescit hortulus tuus?

Nunc majora canamus.

Thomas, Thomas, de Islington, uxorem duxit die nuperâ Dominicâ. Reduxit domum posterâ. Succedenti baculum emit. Postridie ferit illam. Ægrescit illa subsequenti. Proximâ (nempe Veneris) est

mortua. Plurimum gestiit Thomas, quòd appropinquanti Sabbato efferenda sit.

Horner quidam Johannulus in angulo sedebat, artocreas quasdam deglutiens. Inseruit pollices, pruna nana evellens, et magnâ voce exclamavit "Dii boni, quàm bonus puer fio!

Diddle-diddle-dumkins! meus unicus filius Johannes cubitum ivit, integris braccis, caligâ unâ tantùm, indutus. Diddle-diddle, &c. DA CAPO.

Hic adsum saltans Joannula. Cum nemo adsit mihi, semper resto sola.

Ænigma mihi hoc solvas, et Œdipus fies.

Quâ ratione assimulandus sit equus TREMULO?

Quippe cui tota communicatio sit per HAY et NEIGH, juxta consilium illud Dominicum. "Fiat omnis communicatio vestra YEA et NAY."

In his nugis caram diem consumo, dum invigilo valetudini carioris nostræ Emmæ, quæ apud nos jamdudum ægrotat. Salvere vos jubet mecum Maria mea, ipsa integrâ valetudine. ELIA.

Ab agro Enfeldiense datum, Aprilis nescio quibus Calendis—Davus sum, non Calendarius.

P.S.—Perdita in toto est Billa Reformatura.

LETTER CCXXVIII.] No date.]

Dear B. B.,—I am sure I cannot fill a letter, though I should disfurnish my skull to fill it; but you expect something, and shall have a notelet. Is

Sunday, not divinely speaking, but humanly and holidaysically, a blessing? Without its institution, would our rugged taskmasters have given us a leisure day, so often, think you, as once in a month? or, if it had not been instituted, might they not have given us every sixth day? Solve me this problem. If we are to go three times a-day to church, why has Sunday slipt into the notion of a *holli*day? A Holy-day I grant it. The Puritans, I have read in Southey's book, knew the distinction. They made people observe Sunday rigorously, would not let a nursery-maid walk out in the fields with children for recreation on that day. But *then*—they gave the people a holiday from all sorts of work every second Tuesday. This was giving to the two Cæsars that which was *his* respective. Wise, beautiful, thoughtful, generous legislators! Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays? No: (d—n him!)—he would turn the six days into sevenths,

> "And those three smiling seasons of the year
> Into a Russian Winter."—Old Play.

I am sitting opposite a person who is making strange distortions with the gout, which is not unpleasant—to me at least. What is the reason we do not sympathize with pain, short of some terrible surgical operation? Hazlitt, who boldly says all he feels, avows that not only he does not pity sick people, but he hates them. I obscurely recognise his meaning. Pain is probably too selfish a consideration, too simply a consideration of self-attention. We pity poverty, loss of friends, &c.—more complex things, in which the sufferer's feelings are associated with others. This is a rough thought

suggested by the presence of gout; I want head to extricate it and plane it. What is all this to your letter? I felt it to be a good one, but my turn, when I write at all, is perversely to travel out of the record, so that my letters are any thing but answers. So you still want a motto! You must not take my ironical one, because your book, I take it, is too serious for it. Bickerstaff might have used it for *his* lucubrations. What do you think of (for a title) *Religio Tremuli?* or *Tremebundi?* There is *Religio-Medici* and *Laici*. But perhaps the volume is not quite Quakerish enough, or exclusively so, for it. Your own "Vigils" is perhaps the best. While I have space, let me congratulate with you the return of Spring: what a summery Spring too! all those qualms about the dog and cray-fish melt before it. I am going to be happy and *vain* again.

A hasty farewell.

C. LAMB.

VII.

Correspondence with William Hone.

Letter CCXXIX.] 9 Nov., '21.

Dear Sir,—I was not very well nor in spirits when your pleasant note reached me, or should have noticed it sooner. Our Hebrew brethren seem to appreciate the good things of this life in more liberal latitude than we, to judge from their frequent graces. One, I think, you must have omitted: "After concluding a bargain." Their distinction of "Fruits growing upon trees," and "upon the ground," I can understand. A sow makes quite a different grunt (*her grace*) over chesnuts and pignuts. The last is a little above Elia. With thanks, and wishing grace be with you.

Yours, C. Lamb.

Mr. Hone,
45, *Ludgate Hill.*

Letter CCXXX.] E. I. H. 19 May, '23.

Dear Sir,—I have been very agreeably entertained with your present, which I found very curious and amusing. What wiseacres our forefathers appear to

have been! It should make *us* thankful, who are grown so rational and polite. I should call to thank you for the book, but go home to Dalston at present. I shall beg your acceptance (when I see you) of my little book. I have Ray's *Collections of English Words not generally Used*, 1691; and in page 60 ("North Country words") occurs "*Rynt ye*"—"by your leave," "stand handsomely." As, "Rynt you, witch," quoth Besse Locket to her mother; Proverb, Cheshire.—Doubtless this is the "Aroint" of Shakspeare.

In the same collection I find several Shaksperisms. "Rooky" wood: a Northern word for "reeky,' "misty," &c. "Shandy," a north country word for "wild." Sterne was York,

Yours obliged,

C. LAMB.

I am at 14, Kingsland Row, Dalston. Will you take a walk over on Sunday? We dine exactly at 4, and shall be most glad to see you. If I don't hear from you (by note to E. I. Ho.) I will expect you.

Mr. Hone,
45, Ludgate Hill.

LETTER CCXXXI.] [10th August, 1825.]

Dear H.,—Will you direct these from Miss Hazlitt to Mr. Thelwall, whose address I know not?

I have returned the Shakspeare *errata*, finding much nonsense; good principles of correction, but sad wildness in the application of them. No magazine, as magazines go, would pay for the

inclosed. Thelwall may take them for friendship's sake.

Yours, as before,

C. LAMB.

*Mr. Hone,
45, Ludgate Hill.*

LETTER CCXXXII.] [August 12, 1825.]

Dear Hone,—Your books are right acceptable. I did not write farther about Dogget, because on second thoughts the book I mean does not refer to him. A coach from the "Bell," or "Bell and Crown," sets off to Enfield at half-past four. Put yourself in it *to-morrow* afternoon, and come to us; take a bed at an inn, and waste all Sunday with us. We desire to show you the country here. If we are out when you come, the maid is instructed to keep you upon tea and proper bread and butter till we come home. Pray secure me the last number of the *Every Day Book*, that which has S. R[ay] in it, which by mistake *has never come*. Did our newsman not bring it on Monday? Don't send home for it, for if I get it hereafter, (so I have it at last,) it is all I want. Mind, we shall expect you Saturday night or Sunday morning. There are Edmonton coaches from Bishopsgate every half hour. The walk thence to Enfield is easy, across the fields; a mile and half.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

This invitation is "ingenuous." I assure you we want to see you here. Or will Sunday night and all day Monday suit you better? The coach sets you down at Mr. Leishman's.

Friday.

Mr. Hone,
Colebrook Cottage, Islington.

LETTER CCXXXIII.] [1825.]

Dear H.—The first bit of writing I have done these many weeks. The quotations from both the Colliers are correct, I assure you.

C. LAMB, getting well, but weak.

Mr. Hone,
45, Ludgate Hill.

LETTER CCXXXIV.] [August, 1825.]

Dear Hone,—I sent you a note by post to-day, but this comes sooner by a friend. Put yourself in the coach ("Bell," Holborn) to-morrow (Saturday) afternoon, half-past four. Come and take a bed at an inn, and waste Sunday with us gloriously. We have dainty spots to show you. If you can't come, come Sunday and stay Monday. Coaches to Edmonton go hourly from Bishopgate, but we shall hope for you on Saturday (to-morrow) evening.

C. LAMB.

Friday,
Mrs. Leishman's,
Chase,
Enfield.

Pray send the inclosed, and burn what comes inclosed in the *post* letter. Put *last* week's *Every*

Day in your pocket, which we have missed; that which has S. R[ay].

Mr. Hone,
Colebrook Cottage,
Islington.

LETTER CCXXXV.] 30 Sept., [1825.]

Dear H.,—I came home in a week from Enfield, worse than I went. My sufferings have been intense, but are abating. I begin to know what a little sleep is. My sister has sunk under her anxieties about me. She is laid up, deprived of reason for many weeks to come, I fear. She is in the same house, but we do not meet. It makes both worse. I can just hobble down as far as the "Angel" once a day; further kills me. When I can stretch to Copenh[agen] Street I will. If you come this way any morning, I can only just shake you by the hand. This gloomy house does not admit of making my friends welcome. You have come off triumphant with Bartholomew Fair. Yours, (writ with difficulty,)

C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,
Ludgate Hill.

LETTER CCXXXVI.] [Enfield, 25 July, 1826.]

Dear H.,—The Quotidian came in as pleasantly as it was looked for at breakfast time yesterday. You have repaid my poor stanzas with interest.[1] This last interlineation is one of those instances of affecta-

[1] Referring to Hone's "Quatrains" to Lamb.—F.

tion rightly applied. Read the sentence without it, how bald it is! Your idea of "worsted in the dog-days" was capital.

We are here so comfortable that I am confident we shall stay one month, from this date, most probably longer; so if you please, you can cut your out-of-town room for that time. I have sent up my petit farce altered; and Harley is at the theatre now. It cannot come out for some weeks. When it does, we think not of leaving her, but to borrow a bed of you for the night.

I write principally to say that the 4th of August is coming, — Dogget's Coat and Badge Day on the water. You will find a good deal about him in *Cibber's Apology*, octavo, facing the window; and something haply in a thin blackish quarto among the plays, facing the fireside.

You have done with mad dogs; else there is a print of Rowlandson's, or somebody's, of people in pursuit of [one] in a village, which might have come in: also Goldsmith's verses.

Mary's kind remembrance.

C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,
Colebrook Cottage.
Islington.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.] [Feb. 5, 1827.]

For God's sake be more sparing of your poetry: your this week's Number has an excess of it.

In haste, C. L.

Mr. Hone,
22, Belvidere Place,
near Suffolk Street,
Borough.

LETTER CCXXXIX.] [March 20, 1827.]

Damnable *erratum* (can't you notice it?) in the last line but two of the last *Extract* in *No.* 9, *Garrick Plays*—

"Blushing forth golden hair and glorious red:"

A sun-bright line spoil'd.

67. *Blush* for *Blushing.*

N.B.—The general Number was excellent. Also a few lines higher—

"Restrain'd Liberty attain'd is sweet"

should have a full stop. 'Tis the end of the old man's speech. These little blemishes kill such delicate things; prose feeds on grosser punctualities. You have now 3 Numbers in hand; one I sent you yesterday. Of course I send no more till Sunday week.

P.S.—Omitted above, Dear Hone. C. L.

Mr. Hone,
No. 22, Belvidere Place,
Southwark.

LETTER CCXL.] [Aug. 10, 1827.]

My dear Hone,—We are both excessively grieved at dear Matilda's illness, whom we have ever regarded with the greatest respect. Pray God, your next news, which we shall expect most anxiously, shall give hopes of her recovery.

Mary keeps her health very well, and joins in kind remembrances and best wishes.

A few more Numbers (about 7) will empty my Extract Book; then we will consult about the "Specimens." By then, I hope you will be able to talk about business. How you continue your book at all, and so well, in trying circumstances, I know not. But don't let it stop. Would to God I could help you!—but we have the house full of company, which we came to avoid.—God bless you. C. L.

Mr. Hone,
22, Belvidere Place.
Southwark.

LETTER CCXLI.] [Oct. 1827.]

Dear Hone,—I was most sensibly gratified by receiving the *T*—— *B*—— on Friday evening at Enfield!!

Thank you. In haste, C. L.

Don't spare the Extracts. They'll eke out till Christmas.

How is your daghter? [*sic.*]

Mr. Hone,
22, Belvidere Place,
Southwark.

LETTER CCXLII.] May 2, 1828.

Dear H.,—Valter Vilson dines with us to-morrow. Vell! How I should like to see Hone!

C. LAMB.

Enfield, Wednesday.
Mr. Hone,
22, Belvidere Place,
near the Obelisk, Southwark.

LETTER CCXLIII.] [July 1, 1830.]

Pray let Matilda keep my newspapers till you hear from me, as we are meditating a town residence.

C. LAMB.

Let her keep them as the apple of her eye.
Mr. Hone,
13, Gracechurch Street.

LETTER CCXLIV.] Enfield, 17 June, 1830.

I hereby impower Matilda Hone to superintend daily the putting into the twopenny post the *Times* newspaper of the day before, directed "Mr. Lamb, Enfield," which shall be held a *full and sufficient direction;* the said insertion to commence on Monday morning next. And I do engage to pay to William Hone, Coffee and Hotel Man, the quarterly sum of £1, to be paid at the ordinary Quarter days, or thereabout, for the reversion of the said paper, commencing with the 24th inst., or Feast of John the Baptist; the intervening days to be held and considered as nothing. C. LAMB.

Vivant Coffee, Coffee—pot—que!
Mr. Hone,
Coffee-house and Hotel,
13, Gracechurch Street, London.

LETTER CCXLV.] [March 6, 1833.]

Dear Friend,—Thee hast sent a Christian epistle to me, and I should not feel dear if I neglected to reply to it, which would have been sooner if that vain young man, to whom thou didst intrust it, had not kept it back. We should rejoice to see thy outward man here, especially on a day which should not be a first day, being liable to worldly callers in on that day. Our little book is delayed by a heathenish injunction, threatened by the man Taylor. Canst thou copy and send, or bring with thee, a vanity in verse which in my younger days I wrote on friend Ader's pictures? Thou wilt find it in the book called the *Table Book*.

Tryphena and Tryphosa, whom the world calleth Mary and Emma, greet you with me.

CH. LAMB.

6th of 3rd month, 4th day.

W. Hone, Esq.,
Grasshopper Hotel,
Gracechurch Street.

LETTER CCXLVI.] [No date.]

Dear H.,—I don't know by your letter whether you are resident at Newington Green, nor at *what number*. So I discharge this, as a surer shot, at Russell Court. Your almanack is funny; it only disappointed me as being not an almanack. What a one you might make! embracing a real calendar, with astrological ridicule, predictions like Tom Brown's "for every day in the

week." The only information I receive from this is that New Year's Day happened this year on the 1st of January. I do not see the days even set down on which I ought to go to church, the Dominical Letter: fie! I will only add that Enfield is still here, with its accustomed shoulders of mutton, fine Geneva tipple, &c.

So hoping sometime for a fine day's walk with you, I rest, C. L.

Mary's love to both of you.

Mr. Hone,
29, *Russell Court,*
Brydges Street, Covent Garden.

LETTER CCXLVII.] [No date.]

Dear Sir,—Miss Hazlitt is anxious about her MS. novel.[1] Would you be so kind as to transmit it some way or other to Mr. Hardy, 30, Queen's Row, or Queen's Square, Pimlico, if he has not already got it? I am afraid I have not duly acknowledged the present of your excellent pamphlet, for which much thanks and approbation, tho' late.

I remain, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,
45, *Ludgate Hill.*

LETTER CCXLVIII.] [No date.]

Dear H.,—May I trouble your kindness (a pretty phrase and new) to transmit for me the accompanying

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[1] Referred to in a former letter. It does not appear to have been published. Lamb revised some of Lady Stoddart's novels for the press, and made many alterations in them.—H.

farce (which I leave open for your *amusement*) to Terry, with the inclosed, at the Adelphi; or his own house, if it can be there learned, and is not far distant, still better. I have no messenger, and am crippled for going so far. The letter must go with it. I return, with the farce, three books. Pick out the *Cobbler*.

Yours, "every day," C. L.

Mr. Hone,
With four Books.

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[1] For other letters to Hone, see the "Miscellaneous Correspondence."

VIII.

Correspondence with Mr. B. W. Procter.

Letter CCLI.] April 13, 1823.

Dear Lad,—You must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros, never to have acknowledged the receipt of your precious present. But indeed I am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king to spare a friend's life: whether it is that the Magazine paying me so much a page I am loath to throw away composition. How much a sheet do you give your correspondents? I have hung up Pope, and a gem it is, in my town room; I hope for your approval. Though it accompanies the *Essay on Man*, I think that was not the poem he is here meditating. He would have looked up, somehow affectedly, if he were just conceiving "Awake, my St. John." Neither is he in the *Rape of the Lock* mood exactly. I think he has just made out the last lines of the "Epistle to Jervis," between gay and tender,

"And other beauties envy Worsley's eyes."

I'll be d . . .'d if that isn't the line. He is brooding over it, with a dreamy phantom of Lady Mary floating before him. He is thinking which is the earliest possible day and hour that she will first see it. What a miniature piece of gentility it is! Why did you give it me? I do not like you enough to give you any thing so good.

I have dined with T. Moore and breakfasted with Rogers, since I saw you; have much to say about them when we meet, which I trust will be in a week or two. I have been over-watched and over-poeted since Wordsworth has been in town. I was obliged for health's sake to wish him gone, but now he is gone I feel a great loss. I am going to Dalston to recruit, and have serious thoughts of altering my condition, that is, of taking to sobriety. What do you advise me?

Rogers spake very kindly of you, as every body does, and none with so much reason as your

C. L.

LETTER CCLII.]

My dear Procter,—I do agnise a shame in not having been to pay my congratulations to Mrs. Procter and your happy self, but on Sunday (my only morning) I was engaged to a country walk; and in virtue of the hypostatical union between us, when Mary calls, it is understood that I call too, we being univocal.

But indeed I am ill at these ceremonious inductions. I fancy I was not born with a call on my head, though I have brought one down upon it with a vengeance. I love not to pluck that sort of frail crude, but to stay its ripening into visits. In probability Mary will be at Southampton Row this morning, and something of that kind be matured between you, but in any case not many hours shall elapse before I shake you by the hand.

Meantime give my kindest felicitations to Mrs. Procter, and assure her I look forward with the greatest delight to our acquaintance. By the way,

the deuce a bit of cake has come to hand, which hath an inauspicious look at first, but I comfort myself that that mysterious service hath the property of Sacramental Bread, which mice cannot nibble, nor time moulder.

I am married myself to a severe step-wife, who keeps me, not at bed and board, but at desk and board, and is jealous of my morning aberrations. I cannot slip out to congratulate kinder unions. It is well she leaves me alone o'nights,—the d——d Day-hag *Business*. She is even now peeping over me to see I am writing no love letters. I come, my dear—Where is the Indigo Sale Book?

Twenty adieus, my dear friends, till we meet.

Yours most truly,

C. LAMB.

Leadenhall, Nov. 11th, '24.

LETTER CCLIII.] Jan. 19th, 1829.

My dear Procter,—I am ashamed not to have taken the drift of your pleasant letter, which I find to have been pure invention; but jokes are not suspected in Bœotian Enfield. We are plain people, and our talk is of corn and cattle and Waltham markets. Besides, I was a little out of sorts when I received it. The fact is, I am involved in a case which has fretted me to death, and I have no reliance except on you to extricate me. I am sure you will give me your best legal advice, having no professional friend besides but Robinson and Talfourd, with neither of whom, at present, I am on the best of terms. My brother's widow left a will, made during the lifetime of my

brother, in which I am named sole executor, by which she bequeathes forty acres of arable property, which it seems she held under covert baron, unknown to my brother, to the heirs of the body of Elizabeth Dowden, her married daughter by a first husband, in fee simple, recoverable by fine; invested property, mind, for there is the difficulty; subject to leet and quit-rent; in short, worded in the most guarded terms, to shut out the property from Isaac Dowden, the husband. Intelligence has just come of the death of this person in India, where he made a will, entailing this property (which seemed entangled enough already) to the heirs of his body that should not be born of his wife; for it seems by the law in India, natural children can recover. They have put the cause into Exchequer process here, removed by *certiorari* from the native courts; and the question is, whether I should, as executor, try the cause here, or again re-remove it to the Supreme Sessions at Bangalore, which I understand I can, or plead a hearing before the Privy Council here. As it involves all the little property of Elizabeth Dowden, I am anxious to take the fittest steps, and what may be least expensive. For God's sake assist me, for the case is so embarrassed that it deprives me of sleep and appetite. M. Burney thinks there is a case like it in chap. 170, sec. 5, in "Fearn's Contingent Remainders." Pray read it over with him dispassionately, and let me have the result. The complexity lies in the questionable power of the husband to alienate *in usum* enfeoffments whereof he was only collaterally seized, &c.

I had another favour to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings: a few lines of verse for a young friend's album (six will be enough). M. Burney will

tell you who she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold. Six lines—make 'em eight—signed Barry C——. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be "headstrong, lovers of their own wills, having albums." I fled hither to escape the albumean persecution, and had not been in my new house twenty-four hours when the daughter of the next house came in with a friend's album to beg a contribution, and the following day intimated she had one of her own. Two more have sprung up since. "If I take the wings of the morning" and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, there will albums be. New Holland has albums. But the age is to be complied with. M. B. will tell you the sort of girl I request the ten lines for. Somewhat of a pensive cast, what you admire. The lines may come before the law question, as that cannot be determined before Hilary Term, and I wish your deliberate judgment on that. The other may be flimsy and superficial. And if you have not burnt your returned letter, pray resend it me, as a monumental token of my stupidity. 'Twas a little unthinking of you to touch upon a sore subject. Why, by dabbling in those accursed Annuals I have become a by-word of infamy all over the kingdom. I have sicken'd decent women for asking me to write in albums. There be dark "jests" abroad, Master Cornwall, and some riddles may live to be cleared up. And 'tisn't every saddle is put on the right steed. And forgeries and false Gospels are not peculiar to the age following the Apostles. And some tubs don't stand on their right bottom, which is all I

wish to say in these ticklish times; and so your servant,

CH. LAMB.

LETTER CCLIV.] Jan. 22nd, 1829.

Don't trouble yourself about the verses. Take 'em coolly as they come. Any day between this and Midsummer will do. Ten lines the extreme. There is no mystery in my incognita. She has often seen you, though you may not have observed a silent brown girl, who for the last twelve years has rambled about our house in her Christmas holidays. She is Italian by name and extraction. Ten lines about the blue sky of her country will do, as 'tis her foible to be proud of it.—Item: I have made her a tolerable Latinist. She is called Emma Isola. I shall, I think, be in town in a few weeks, when I will assuredly see you. I will put in here loves to Mrs. Procter and the anti-Capulets, because Mary tells me I omitted them in my last. I like to see my friends here. I have put my law-suit into the hands of an Enfield practioner, a plain man, who seems perfectly to understand it, and gives me hopes of a favourable result.

Rumour tells us that Miss Holcroft is married. Who is Badman, or Bed'em?[1] Have I seen him at Montague's? I hear he is a great chemist. I am sometimes chemical myself. A thought strikes me with horror. Pray heaven he may not have done it for the sake of trying chemical experiments upon

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[1] Baddams. Miss Holcroft married Dr. Baddams, and survived him, and married a second time.—H.

her,—young female subjects are so scarce. Louisa would make a capital shot. Arn't you glad about Burke's case? We may set off the Scotch murders against the Scotch novels: Hare, the Great Unchanged!

M. B. is richly worth your knowing. He is on the top scale of my friendship ladder, on which an angel or two is still climbing, and some, alas! descending. Did you see a sonnet of mine in Blackwood's last? Curious construction! Elaborata facilitas! And now I'll tell. 'Twas written for the *Gem*, but the editors declined it, on the plea that it would *shock all mothers*; so they published "The Widow," instead. I am born out of time. I have no conjecture about what the present world calls delicacy. I thought "Rosamund Gray" was a pretty modest thing. Hessey assures me that the world would not bear it. I have lived to grow into an indecent character. When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed, "Damn the age! I will write for antiquity."

Erratum in Sonnet:—Last line but something, for "tender," read *tend*. The Scotch do not know our law terms; but I find some remains of honest, plain, old writing lurking there still. They were not so mealy-mouthed as to refuse my verses. Maybe 'tis their oatmeal.

Blackwood sent me £20 for the drama. Somebody cheated me out of it next day; and my new pair of breeches, just sent home, cracking at first putting on, I exclaimed, in my wrath, "All tailors are cheats, and all men are tailors." Then I was better. C. L.

LETTER CCLV.] Jan. 29th, 1829.

When Miss Ouldcroft (who is now Mrs. Beddam, and Bed—damn'd to her) was at Enfield, which she was in Summer time, and owed her health to its sun and genial influences, she visited (with young lady-like impertinence) a poor man's cottage that had a pretty baby, (O the yearning!) gave it fine caps and sweetmeats. On a day, broke into the parlour our two maids uproarious. "O ma'am, who do you think Miss Ouldcroft (they pronounce it Holcroft) has been working a cap for?" "A child," answered Mary, in true Shandean female simplicity. "'Tis the man's child as was taken up for sheep-stealing." Miss Ouldcroft was staggered, and would have cut the connection, but by main force I made her go and take her leave of her protégée. I thought, if she went no more, the Abactor or Abactor's wife (vide Ainsworth) would suppose she had heard something; and I have delicacy for a sheep-stealer. The overseers actually overhauled a mutton pie at the baker's, (his first, last, and only hope of mutton pie,) which he never came to eat, and thence inferred his guilt. Per occasionem cujus, I framed the sonnet; observe its elaborate construction. I was four days about it.

THE GIPSY'S MALISON.

"Suck, baby, suck! mother's love grows by giving,
Drain the sweet founts that only thrive by wasting;
Black manhood comes, when riotous guilty living
Hands thee the cup that shall be death in tasting.
Kiss, baby, kiss! mother's lips shine by kisses,
Choke the warm breath that else would fall in blessings;
Black manhood comes, when turbulent guilty blisses
Tend thee the kiss that poisons 'mid caressings.

Hang, baby, hang! mother's love loves such forces,
Strain the fond neck that bends still to thy clinging;
Black manhood comes, when violent lawless courses
Leave thee a spectacle in rude air swinging."
So sang a wither'd beldam energetical,
And bann'd the ungiving door with lips prophetical.

Barry, study that sonnet. It is curiously and perversely elaborate. 'Tis a choking subject, and therefore the reader is directed to the structure of it. See you! and was this a fourteener to be rejected by a trumpery annual? Forsooth, 'twould shock all mothers; and may all mothers, who would so be shocked, be damn'd! as if mothers were such sort of logicians as to infer the future hanging of *their* child from the theoretical hangibility (or capacity of being hanged, if the judge pleases) of every infant born with a neck on. Oh B. C. my whole heart is faint, and my whole head is sick (how is it?) at this damn'd canting unmasculine age!

LETTER CCLVI.] Feb. 2nd, 1829.

Facundissime Poeta! quanquam istiusmodi epitheta oratoribus potiùs quam poetis attinere facilè scio—tamen, facundissime!

Commoratur nobiscum jamdiu, in agro Enfeldiense, scilicet, leguleius futurus, illustrissimus Martinus Burneius, otium agens, negotia nominalia, et officinam clientum vacuam, paululum fugiens. Orat, implorat te—nempe, Martinus—ut si (quòd Dii faciant) fortè fortunâ, absente ipso, advenerit tardus cliens, eum certiorem feceris per literas hûc missas. Intelligisne? an me Anglicè et barbarice ad te hominem perdoctum scribere oportet? C. AGNUS.

Si status de franco tenemento datur avo, et in eodem facto si mediate vel immediate datur *hæredibus vel hæredibus corporis dicti avi*, postrema hæc verba sunt Limitationis non Perquisitionis.

Dixi. CARLAGNULUS.

LETTER CCLVII.] [1829.]

The comings in of an incipient conveyancer are not adequate to the receipt of three twopenny post non-paids in a week. Therefore, after this, I condemn my stub to long and deep silence, or shall awaken it to write to lords. Lest those raptures in this honey-moon of my correspondence, which you avow for the gentle person of my Nuncio, after passing through certain natural grades, as Love, Love and Water, Love with the chill off, then subsiding to that point which the heroic suitor of his wedded dame, the noble-spirited Lord Randolph in the play, declares to be the ambition of his passion, a reciprocation of "complacent kindness," — should suddenly plump down (scarce staying to bait at the mid point of indifference, so hungry it is for distaste) to a loathing and blank aversion, to the rendering probable such counter expressions as this,—"Damn that infernal two-penny postman," (words which make the not yet glutted inamorato "lift up his hands and wonder who can use them.") While, then, you are not ruined, let me assure thee, O thou above the painter, and next only under Giraldus Cambrensis, the most immortal and worthy to be immortal Barry, thy most

ingenious and golden cadences do take my fancy mightily. They are at this identical moment under the hands and the paste of the fairest hands (bating chilblains) in Cambridge, soon to be transplanted to Suffolk, to the envy of half of the young ladies in Bury. But tell me, and tell me truly, gentle swain, is that Isola Bella a true spot in geographical denomination, or a floating Delos in thy brain? Lurks that fair island in verity in the bosom of Lake Maggiore, or some other with less poetic name, which thou hast Cornwallized for the occasion. And what if Maggiore itself be but a coinage of adaptation? Of this, pray resolve me immediately, for my albumess will be catechised on this subject; and how can I prompt her? Lake Leman I know, and Lemon Lake (in a punch bowl) I have swum in, though those lymphs be long since dry. But Maggiore may be in the moon. Unsphinx this riddle for me, for my shelves have no gazetteer. And mayest thou never murder thy father-in-law in the Trivia of Lincoln's Inn New Square Passage, nor afterwards make absurd proposals to the Widow M[ontague]. But I know you abhor any such notions. Nevertheless so did O-Edipus (as Admiral Burney used to call him, splitting the dipthong in spite or ignorance) for that matter.

C. L.

IX.

Correspondence with the Rev. H. F. Cary.

Letter CCLVIII.] India Office, 14th Oct. 1823.

Dear Sir,—If convenient, will you give us house room on Saturday next? I can sleep anywhere. If another Sunday suit you better, pray let me know. We were talking of Roast *Shoulder* of Mutton with onion sauce; but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host.

With respects to Mrs. C., yours truly,

C. Lamb.

Letter CCLIX.] April 3, 1826.

Dear Sir,—It is whispered me that you will not be unwilling to look into our doleful hermitage. Without more preface, you will gladden our cell by accompanying our old chums of the *London*, Darley and A[llan] C[unningham], to Enfield on Wednesday. You shall have hermit's fare, with talk as seraphical as the novelty of the divine life will permit, with an innocent retrospect to the world which we have left, when I will thank you for your hospitable offer at Chiswick, and with plain hermit reasons evince the necessity of abiding here.

Without hearing from you, then, you shall give us leave to expect you. I have long had it on my conscience to invite you, but spirits have been low; and

I am indebted to chance for this awkward but most sincere invitation.

Yours, with best loves to Mrs. Cary,

C. LAMB.

D. knows all about the coaches. Oh for a Museum in the wilderness!

LETTER CCLX.] June 10th, 1828.

Dear Sir,—I long to see Wordsworth once more before he goes hence, but it would be at the expence of health and comfort my infirmities cannot afford. Once only I have been at a dinner party, to meet him, for a whole year past, and I do not know that I am not the worse for it now. There is a necessity for my drinking too much (don't show this to the Bishop of ——, your friend) at and after dinner; then I require spirits at night to allay the crudity of the weaker Bacchus; and in the morning I cool my parched stomach with a fiery libation. Then I am aground in town, and call upon my London friends, and get new wets of ale, porter, &c.; then ride home, drinking where the coach stops, as duly as Edward set up his Waltham Crosses. This, or near it, was the process of my experiment of dining at Talfourd's to meet Wordsworth, and I am not well now. Now let me beg that we may meet here with assured safety to both sides. Darley and Procter come here on Sunday morning; pray arrange to come along with them. Here I can be tolerably moderate. In town, the very air of town turns my head and is intoxication enough, if intoxication knew a limit. I am a poor country mouse, and your cates disturb me. Tell

me you will come. We have a bed, and a half or three quarters bed, at all your services; and the adjoining inn has many. If engaged on Sunday, tell me when you will come; a Saturday will suit as well. I would that Wordsworth would come too. Pray believe that 'tis my health only, which brought me here, that frightens me from the wicked town. Mary joins in kind remembrances to Mrs. Cary and yourself.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXI.] 13 April, 1831.

Dear C. — I am *daily* for this week expecting Wordsworth, who will not name a day. I have been expecting him by months and by weeks; but he has reduced the hope within the seven fractions hebdomidal of this hebdoma. Therefore I am sorry I cannot see you on Thursday. I think within a week or two I shall be able to invite myself some day for a day, but we hermits with difficulty poke out of our shells. Within that ostraceus retirement I meditate not unfrequently on you. My sister's kindest remembrances to your both.

C. L.

LETTER CCLXII.] [1832.]

Assidens est mihi bona soror, Euripiden evolvens, donum vestrum, carissime Cary, pro quo gratias agimus, lecturi atque iterum lecturi idem. Pergratus est liber ambobus, nempe "Sacerdotis Commiserationis," sacrum opus a te ipso Humanissimæ Religionis

Sacerdote dono datum. Lachrymantes gavisuri sumus; est ubi dolor fiat voluptas; nec semper dulce mihi est ridere; aliquando commutandum est he! he! he! cum heu! heu! heu!

"A Musis Tragicis me non penitus abhorruisse testis sit Carmen Calamitosum, nescio quo autore linguâ prius vernaculâ scriptum, et nuperrimè a me ipso Latine versum scilicet, "Tom Tom of Islington." Tenuistine?

"Thomas Thomas de Islington,
Uxorem duxit Die quâdam Solis,
Abduxit domum sequenti die,
Emit baculum subsequenti,
Vapulat illa posterâ,
Ægrotat succedenti, Mortua fit crastinâ."

Et miro gaudio afficitur Thomas luce posterâ quod subsequenti (nempe, Dominicâ) uxor sit efferenda.

"En Iliades Domesticas!
En circulum calamitatum!
Planè hebdomadalem tragœdiam."

I nunc et confer Euripiden vestrum his luctibus, hâc morte uxoriâ; confer Alcesten! Hecuben! quas non antiquas Heroinas Dolorosas.

Suffundor genas lachrymis tantas strages revolvens. Quid restat nisi quod Tecum Tuam Caram salutamus ambosque valere jubeamus, nosmet ipsi bene valentes

ELIA.

Datum ab agro Enfeldiensi, Maii die sextâ, 1831.

LETTER CCLXIII.] Sept. 9th, 1833.

Dear Sir,—Your packet I have only just received, owing, I suppose, to the absence of Moxon, who is

flaunting it about *à la Parisienne*, with his new bride, our Emma, much to his satisfaction, and not a little to our dulness. We shall be quite well by the time you return from Worcestershire, and most, most (observe the repetition) glad to see you here, or anywhere.

I will take my time with Darley's act. I wish poets would write a little plainer; he begins some of his words with a letter which is unknown to the English typography.

Yours, most truly,

C. LAMB.

P.S.—Pray let me know when you return. We are at Mr. Walden's, Church Street, Edmonton; no longer at Enfield. You will be amused to hear that my sister and I have, with the aid of Emma, scrambled through the "Inferno," by the blessed furtherance of your polar-star translation. I think we scarce left any thing unmadeout. But our partner has left us, and we have not yet resumed. Mary's chief pride in it was that she should some day brag of it to you. Your "Dante" and Sandys' "Ovid" are the only helpmates of translations. Neither of you shirk a word.

Fairfax's "Tasso" is no translation at all. 'Tis better in some places, but it merely observes the number of stanzas; as for images, similes, &c., he finds 'em himself, and never troubles Peter for the matter."

In haste, dear Cary, yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Has M. sent you "Elia," second volume? If not he shall. Taylor and we are at law about it.

LETTER CCLXIV.] Sept. 12, 1834.

"By Cot's plessing we will not be absence at the grace."

Dear C.—We long to see you, and hear account of your peregrinations, of the Tun at Heidelburg, the Clock at Strasburg, the statue at Rotterdam, the dainty Rhenish, and poignant Mosselle wines, Westphalian hams, and Botargoes of Altona. But perhaps you have seen, not tasted any of these things.

Yours, very glad to chain you back again to your proper centre, books and Bibliothecæ,

C. and M. LAMB.

I have only got your note just now *per neglentiam periniqui Moxoni.*

LETTER CCLXV.] [Oct. 1834.]

I protest I know not in what words to invest my sense of the shameful violation of hospitality which I was guilty of on that fatal Wednesday. Let it be blotted from the calendar. Had it been committed at a layman's house, say a merchant's or manufacturer's, a cheesemonger's or greengrocer's, or, to go higher, a barrister's, a member of Parliament's, a rich banker's, I should have felt alleviation, a drop of self-pity. But to be seen deliberately to go out of the house of a clergyman drunk! a clergyman of the Church of England too! not that alone, but of an expounder of that dark Italian Hierophant, an exposition little short of *his* who dared unfold the Apocalypse: divine riddles both; and, without supernal grace vouchsafed, Arks not to be fingered without present blasting to the touchers. And then, from what

house! Not a common glebe or vicarage, (which yet had been shameful,) but from a kingly repository of sciences, human and divine, with the primate of England for its guardian, arrayed in public majesty, from which the profane vulgar are bid fly. Could all those volumes have taught me nothing better! With feverish eyes on the succeeding dawn I opened upon the faint light, enough to distinguish, in a strange chamber, not immediately to be recognised, garters, hose, waistcoat, neckerchief, arranged in dreadful order and proportion, which I knew was not mine own. 'Tis the common symptom on awaking, I judge my last night's condition from. A tolerable scattering on the floor I hail as being too probably my own, and if the candlestick be not removed I assoil myself. But this finical arrangement, this finding every thing in the morning in exact diametrical rectitude, torments me. By whom was I divested? Burning blushes! not by the fair hands of nymphs, the Buffam Graces? Remote whispers suggested that I *coached* it home in triumph. Far be that from working pride in me, for I was unconscious of the locomotion; that a young Mentor accompanied a reprobate old Telemachus; that, the Trojan like, he bore his charge upon his shoulders, while the wretched incubus, in glimmering sense, hiccuped drunken snatches of flying on the bats' wings after sunset. An aged servitor was also hinted at, to make disgrace more complete, one, to whom my ignominy may offer further occasions of revolt (to which he was before too fondly inclining) from the true faith; for, at a sight of my helplessness, what more was needed to drive him to the advocacy of independency? Occasion led me through Great Russell Street yesterday. I gazed at the great knocker.

My feeble hands in vain essayed to lift it. I dreaded that Argus Portitor, who doubtless lanterned me out on that prodigious night. I called the Elginian marbles. They were cold to my suit. I shall never again, I said, on the wide gates unfolding, say, without fear of thrusting back, in a light but peremptory air, "I am going to Mr. Cary's." I passed by the walls of Balclutha. I had imaged to myself a zodiac of third Wednesdays irradiating by glimpses the Edmonton dulness. I dreamed of Highmore! . I am de-vited to come on Wednesdays. Villanous old age, that, with second childhood, brings linked hand in hand her inseparable twin, new inexperience, which knows not effects of liquor. Where I was to have sate for a sober, middle-aged-and-a-half gentleman, literary too, the neat fingered artist can educe no notions but of a dissolute Silenus, lecturing natural philosophy to a jeering Chromius, or a Mnasilus. Pudet. From the context gather the lost name of

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LETTER CCLXVI.] [Oct. 18, 1834.]

Dear Sir,—The unbounded range of munificence presented to my choice, staggers me. What can twenty votes do for one hundred and two widows! I cast my eyes hopeless among the viduage. N.B. Southey[1] might be ashamed of himself to let his aged mother stand at the top of the list, with his £100

[1] This refers to a list of candidates for admission to a Widows Fund, for which Lamb was entitled to vote. A Mrs. Southey was at the head of it.—T.

a year and butt of sack. Sometimes I sigh over No. 12, Mrs. Carve-ill, some poor relation of mine, no doubt. No. 15 has my wishes, but then she is a Welsh one. I have Ruth upon No. 21. I'd tug hard for No. 24. No. 25 is an anomaly; there can be no Mrs. Hogg. No. 34 ensnares me. No. 73 should not have met so foolish a person. No. 92 may bob it as she likes, but she catches no cherry of me. So I have even fixed at hap-hazard, as you'll see.

Yours, every third Wednesday,[1]

C. L.

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[1] See also "Miscellaneous Correspondence."

X.

Correspondence with Mr. Moxon.

Letter CCLXVII.] March 19th, 1828.

My dear M.,—It is my firm determination to have nothing to do with "Forget-me-Nots;" pray excuse me as civilly as you can to Mr. Hurst. I will take care to refuse any other applications. The things which Pickering has, if to be had again, I have promised absolutely, you know, to poor Hood, from whom I had a melancholy epistle yesterday; besides that Emma has decided objections to her own and her friend's album verses being published; but if she gets over that, they are decidedly Hood's.

Till we meet, farewell. Loves to Dash.[1]

C. L.

Letter CCLXVIII.] May 3rd, 1828.

Dear M.,—My friend Patmore, author of the *Months*, a very pretty publication,— of sundry Essays in the *London*, *New Monthly*, &c., wants to dispose of a volume or two of "Tales." Perhaps they might chance to suit Hurst; but be that as it may, he will call upon you *under favour of my recommendation;* and as he is returning to

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[1] The great dog, which was at one time Mr. Moxon's constant companion in his long walks.—T.

France, where he lives, if you can do any thing for him in the Treaty line, to save him dancing over the Channel every week, I am sure you will. I said I'd never trouble you again; but how vain are the resolves of mortal man! P. is a very hearty, friendly fellow, and was poor John Scott's second, as I will be yours when you want one. May you never be mine!

Yours truly,

C. L.

Enfield.
Mr. Moxon,
Messrs. Hurst & Co.,
Booksellers,
St. Paul's Churchyard.

LETTER CCLXIX.] No date. [About 1828.]

Dear Moxon,—Much thanks for the books. Hood is excellent. Mr. Westwood, who wishes to consult you about his son, will acquaint you with our change of life. Mary's very bad spirits drove me upon it, and it seems to answer admirably. We shall be happy to see you at our table and hole; say, the *Sunday after next.*

Yours very truly,

C. L

Edward Moxon, Esq.,
Messrs. Hurst & Co.,
65, St. Paul's Churchyard.

LETTER CCLXX.] [May 12, 1830.]

Dear M.,—I dined with your and my Rogers, at Mr. Cary's, yesterday. Cary consulted me on the

proper bookseller to offer a lady's MS. novel to. I said I would write to *you*. But I wish you would call on the translator of Dante, at the British Museum, and talk with him. He is the pleasantest of clergymen. I told him of all Rogers's handsome behaviour to you, and you are already no stranger. Go! I made Rogers laugh about your Nightingale Sonnet, not having heard one. 'Tis a good sonnet, notwithstanding. You shall have the books shortly.

C. L.

LETTER CCLXXI.] May 12, [1830.]

Dear Moxon,—I have brought my sister to Enfield, being sure that she had no hope of recovery in London. Her state of mind is deplorable beyond any example. I almost fear whether she has strength at her time of life ever to get out of it. Here she must be nursed, and neither see nor hear of any thing in the world out of her sick chamber. The mere hearing that Southey had called at our lodgings totally upset her. Pray see him, or hear of him at Mr. Rickman's, and excuse my not writing to him. I dare not write or receive a letter in her presence; every little talk so agitates her. Westwood will receive any letter for me, and give it me privately.

Pray assure Southey of my kindliest feelings towards him; and if you do not see him, send this to him.

Kindest remembrances to your sister, and believe me ever yours,

C. LAMB.

Remember me kindly to the Allsops.

LETTER CCLXXII.] August, 1831.

Dear M.,—The *R.A.* here memorized was George Dawe, whom I knew well, and heard many anecdotes of, from DANIELS and WESTALL, at H. Rogers's; *to each of them* it will be well to send a magazine in my name. It will fly like wildfire among the Royal Academicians and artists. Could you get hold of Procter?—his chambers are in Lincoln's Inn, at Montague's; or of Janus Weathercock?[1]—both of their *prose* is capital. Don't encourage poetry. The "Peter's Net"[2] does not intend funny things only. All is fish. And leave out the sickening "Elia" at the end. Then it may comprise letters and characters addressed to Peter; but a signature forces it to be all characteristic of the one man Elia, or the one man, Peter, which cramped me formerly. I have agreed *not* for my sister to know the subjects I choose till the magazine comes out; so beware of speaking of 'em, or writing about 'em, save generally. Be particular about this warning. Can't you drop in some afternoon, and take a bed? The *Athenæum* has been hoaxed with some exquisite poetry, that was, two or three months ago, in "Hone's Book." I like your first Number capitally. But is it not small? Come and see us, week-day if possible.

Send or bring me Hone's Number for August. The anecdotes of E. and of G. D. are substantially true; what does Elia (or Peter) care for dates?

The poem I mean is in "Hone's Book," as far back as April. I do not know who wrote it; but 'tis a

[1] Mr. Wainwright.—T.

[2] Some essays which Lamb was commencing for a new speculation of Mr. Moxon's, *The Englishman's Magazine*.—T.

poem I envy,—*that* and Montgomery's "Last Man:" I envy the writers, because I feel I could have done something like them.

C. L.

LETTER CCLXXIII.] Sept. 5th, 1831.

Dear M.,—Your letter's contents pleased me. I am only afraid of taxing you. Yet I want a stimulus, or I think I should drag sadly. I shall keep the moneys in trust, till I see you fairly over the next 1st January: then I shall look upon them as earned. No part of your letter gave me more pleasure (no, not the £10, tho' you may grin)[1] than that you will revisit old Enfield, which I hope will be always a pleasant idea to you.

Yours, very faithfully,

C. L.

LETTER CCLXXIV.] Oct. 24th, 1831.

To address an abdicated monarch is a nice point of breeding. To give him his lost titles is to mock him; to withhold 'em is to wound him. But his minister, who falls with him, may be gracefully sympathetic. I do honestly feel for your diminution of honours, and regret even the pleasing cares which are part and parcel of greatness. Your magnanimous submission, and the cheerful tone of your renunciation, in a letter which, without flattery, would have

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[1] Mr. Moxon had given Lamb reason to expect he might have such a sum to pay him on account of his poem, *Satan in Search of a Wife*, published (with humorous plates) in 1831. 12mo.—H.

made an "ARTICLE," and which, rarely as I keep letters, shall be preserved, comfort me a little. Will it please, or plague you, to say that when your parcel came I damn'd it? for my pen was warming in my hand at a ludicrous description of a Landscape of an R.A., which I calculated upon sending you to-morrow, the last day you gave me. Now any one calling in, or a letter coming, puts an end to my writing for the day. Little did I think that the mandate had gone out, so destructive to my occupation, so relieving to the apprehensions of the whole body of R.A.'s; so you see I had not quitted the ship while a plank was remaining.

To drop metaphors, I am sure you have done wisely. The very spirit of your epistle speaks that you have a weight off your mind. I have one on mine; the cash in hand, which, as —— less truly says, burns in my pocket. I feel queer at returning it, (who does not?) you feel awkward at retaking it, (who ought not.) Is there no middle way of adjusting this fine embarrassment? I think I have hit upon a medium to skin the sore place over, if not quite to heal it. You hinted that there might be something under £10, by and by, accruing to me—*Devil's Money*;[1] (you are sanguine, say £7. 10*s*.); that I entirely renounce, and abjure all future interest in: I insist upon it; and "by him I will not name," I won't touch a penny of it. That will split your loss, one half, and leave me conscientious possessor of what I hold. Less than your assent to this, no proposal will I accept of.

[1] Alluding to the little extravaganza of Lamb's mentioned in the preceding page, in emulation of the *Devil's Walk* of Southey and Co.—T.

The Rev. Mr. ——, whose name you have left illegible (is it *Seagull?*) never sent me any book on Christ's Hospital, by which I could dream that I was indebted to him for a dedication. Did G. D. send his penny tract to me to convert me to Unitarianism? Dear, blundering soul! why I am as old a one Goddite as himself. Or did he think his cheap publication would bring over the Methodists over the way here?[1] However, I'll give it to the pew-opener, in whom I have a little interest, to hand over to the clerk, whose wife she sometimes drinks tea with, for him to lay before the deacon, who exchanges the civility of the hat with him, for to transmit to the minister, who shakes hands with him out of chapel, and he, in all odds, will —— with it.

I wish very much to see you. I leave it to you to come how you will; we shall be very glad (we need not repeat) to see your sister, or sisters, with you; but for you, individually, I will just hint that a dropping in to tea, unlooked for, about five, stopping bread-and-cheese and gin-and-water, is worth a thousand Sundays. I am naturally miserable on a Sunday; but a week-day evening and supper is like old times. Set out *now*, and give no time to deliberation.

P.S.—The second volume of "Elia" is delightful (ly bound, I mean), and quite cheap. Why, man, 'tis a unique!

If I write much more I shall expand into an article, which I cannot afford to let you have so cheap. By the by, to show the perverseness of human will, while I thought I *must* furnish one of those accursed

[1] Referring to a chapel opposite his lodging at Enfield.—T.

things monthly, it seemed a labour above Hercules's "Twelve" in a year, which were evidently monthly contributions. Now I am emancipated, I feel as if I had a thousand Essays swelling within me. False feelings both!

Your ex-Lampoonist, or Lamb-punnist, from Enfield, October 24, or "last day but one for receiving articles that can be inserted."

LETTER CCLXXV.] Feb. 1832.

Dear Moxon,—The snows are ancle-deep, slush, and mire, that 'tis hard to get to the post-office, and cruel to send the maid out. 'Tis a slough of despair, or I should sooner have thanked you for your offer of the "*Life*," which we shall very much like to have, and will return duly. I do not know when I shall be in town, but in a week or two, at farthest, when I will come as far as you, if I can. We are moped to death with confinement within doors. I send you a curiosity of G. Dyer's tender conscience. Between thirty and forty years since, G. published the "Poet's Fate," in which were two very harmless lines about Mr. Rogers; but Mr. R. not quite approving of them, they were left out in a subsequent edition, 1801. But G. has been worrying about them ever since; if I have heard him once, I have heard him a hundred times, express a remorse proportioned to a consciousness of having been guilty of an atrocious libel. As the devil would have it, a fool they call Barker, in his "Parriana," has quoted the identical two lines, as they stood in some obscure edition anterior to 1801, and the withers of poor G. are again wrung. His

letter is a gem; with his poor blind eyes it has been laboured out at six sittings. The history of the couplet is in page 3 of this irregular production, in which every variety of shape and size that letters can be twisted into is to be found. Do show *his* part of it to Mr. R. some day. If he has bowels, they must melt at the contrition so queerly charactered of a contrite sinner. G. was born, I verily think, without original sin, but chooses to have a conscience, as every Christian gentleman should have; his dear old face is insusceptible of the twist they call a sneer, yet he is apprehensive of being suspected of that ugly appearance. When he makes a compliment, he thinks he has given an affront,—a name is personality. But show (no hurry) this unique recantation to Mr. R.: 'tis like a dirty pocket-handkerchief, mucked with tears of some indigent Magdalen. There is the impress of sincerity in every pot-hook and hanger; and then the gilt frame to such a pauper picture! It should go into the Museum. I am heartily sorry my Devil[1] does not answer. We must try it a little longer; and, after all, I think I must insist on taking a portion of its loss upon myself. It is too much you should lose by two adventures. You do not say how your general business goes on, and I should very much like to talk over it with you here.

Come when the weather will possibly let you; I want to see the Wordsworths, but I do not much like to be all night away. It is dull enough to be here together, but it is duller to leave Mary; in short, it is painful, and in a flying visit I should hardly catch them. I have no beds for them if they came down,

[1] *Satan in Search of a Wife.*—F.

and but a sort of a house to receive them in; yet I shall regret their departure unseen; I feel cramped and straitened every way. Where are they?

We have heard from Emma but once, and that a month ago, and are very anxious for another letter.

You say we have forgot your powers of being serviceable to us. *That* we never shall: I do not know what I should do without you when I want a little commission. Now then: there are left at Miss Buffam's, the "Tales of the Castle," and certain volumes of the "Retrospective Review." The first should be conveyed to Novello's, and the Reviews should be taken to Talfourd's office, ground-floor, east side, Elm Court, Middle Temple, to whom I should have written, but my spirits are wretched; it is quite an effort to write this. So, with the "*Life*," I have cut you out three pieces of service. What can I do for you here, but hope to see you very soon, and think of you with most kindness? I fear to-morrow, between rains and snows, it would be impossible to expect you, but do not let a practicable Sunday pass. We are always at home.

Mary joins in remembrances to your sister, whom we hope to see in any fine-ish weather, when she'll venture.

Remember us to Allsop, and all the dead people; to whom, and to London, we seem dead.

LETTER CCLXXVI.] [April 27, 1833.]

Dear M.,—Mary and I are very poorly. We have had a sick child, who, sleeping or not sleeping, next me, with a pasteboard partition between, killed my

sleep. The little bastard is gone. My bedfellows are cough and cramp; we sleep three in a bed. Domestic arrangements (baker, butcher, and all) devolve on Mary. Don't come yet to this house of pest and age! We propose, when you and E. agree on the time, to come up and meet you at the B———'s, say a week hence, but do you make the appointment.

Mind, our spirits are good, and we are happy in your happinesses. C. L.

Our old and ever loves to dear Emma.

LETTER CCLXXVII.] 1833.

Dear M.,—Many thanks for the books; but most thanks for one immortal sentence: "If I do not *cheat* him, never *trust* me again." I do not know whether to admire most, the wit or justness of the sentiment. It has my cordial approbation. My sense of *meum* and *tuum* applauds it. I maintain it, the eighth commandment hath a secret special reservation, by which the reptile is exempt from any protection from it. As a dog, or a nigger, he is not a holder of property. Not a ninth of what he detains from the world is his own. "Keep you hands from picking and stealing," is no ways referable to his acquists. I doubt whether bearing false witness against thy neighbour at all contemplated this possible scrub. Could Moses have seen the speck in vision? An *ex post facto* law alone could relieve him; and we are taught to expect no eleventh commandment. The outlaw to the Mosaic dispensation!—unworthy to have seen Moses behind!—to lay his desecrating hands upon Elia! Has the irreverent ark-toucher been struck blind, I wonder?

The more I think of him, the less I think of him His meanness is invisible with aid of solar microscope. My moral eye smarts at him. The less flea that bites little fleas! The great BEAST! The beggarly NIT!

More when we meet; mind, you'll come, two of you; and couldn't you go off in the morning, that we may have a day-long curse at him, if curses are not dis-hallowed by descending so low! Amen. Maledicatur in extremis!

C. L.

LETTER CCLXXVIII.] July 24th, 1833.

For God's sake give Emma no more watches; *one* has turned her head. She is arrogant and insulting. She said something very unpleasant to our old clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you, "Pray, sir, can you tell us what's o'clock?" and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking to see "what the time is." I overheard her whispering, "Just so many hours, minutes, &c., to Tuesday; I think St. George's goes too slow." This little present of Time!—why,—'tis Eternity to her!

What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch?

She has spoiled some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away "half-past twelve," which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Square.

Well, if "love me love my watch" answers, she will keep time to you.

It goes right by the Horse Guards.

Dearest M.,—Never mind opposite[1] nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you. I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30th July, as long as my poor months last me, as a festival, gloriously.

Yours ever,

ELIA.

We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

Edmonton, 24th July, twenty minutes past three by Emma's watch.

LETTER CCLXXIX.] August, 1833.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Moxon,—Time very short. I wrote to Miss Fryer, and had the sweetest letter about you, Emma, that ever friendship dictated. "I am full of good wishes, I am crying with good wishes," she says; but you shall see it.

Dear Moxon,—I take your writing most kindly, and shall most kindly your writing from Paris.

I want to crowd another letter to Miss Fryer into the little time after dinner, before post time. So with twenty thousand congratulations,

Yours,

C. L.

I am calm, sober, happy. Turn over for the reason. I got home from Dover Street, by Evans,

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[1] Written on the opposite page to that in which the previous affectionate banter appears.—T

half as sober as a judge. I am turning over a new leaf, as I hope you will now.

[The turn of the leaf presented the following from Miss Lamb:—]

My dear Emma and Edward Moxon,—Accept my sincere congratulations, and imagine more good wishes than my weak nerves will let me put into good set words. The dreary blank of *unanswered questions* which I ventured to ask in vain was cleared up on the wedding day by Mrs. W.[1] taking a glass of wine, and, with a total change of countenance, begging leave to drink Mr. and Mrs. Moxon's health. It restored me from that moment, as if by an electrical stroke, to the entire possession of my senses. I never felt so calm and quiet after a similar illness as I do now. I feel as if all tears were wiped from my eyes, and all care from my heart.

MARY LAMB.

[At the foot of this letter is the following by Charles.]

Wednesday.

Dears again,—Your letter interrupted a seventh game at picquet which *we* were having, after walking to Wright's and purchasing shoes. We pass our time in cards, walks, and reading. We attack Tasso soon.

C. L.

Never was such a calm, or such a recovery. 'Tis her own words undictated.

Nov. 29th, 1833.

Mary is of opinion with me, that two of these sonnets are of a higher grade than any poetry you

[1] The wife of the Landlord of the House at Edmonton.—T.

have done yet. The one to Emma is so pretty! I have only allowed myself to transpose a word in the third line. Sacred shall it be for any intermeddling of mine. But we jointly beg that you will make four lines in the room of the four last. Read "Darby and Joan," in Mrs. Moxon's first album. There you'll see how beautiful in age the looking back to youthful years in an old couple is. But it is a violence to the feelings to anticipate that time in youth. I hope you and Emma will have many a quarrel and many a make-up (and she is beautiful in reconciliation!) before the dark days shall come, in which ye shall say "there is small comfort in them." You have begun a sort of character of Emma in them, very sweetly: carry it on, if you can, through the last lines.

I love the sonnet to my heart, and you *shall* finish it, and I'll be damn'd if I furnish a line towards it. So much for that. The next best is to the Ocean.

> "Ye gallant winds, if e'er your LUSTY CHEEKS
> Blew longing lover to his mistress' side,
> O, puff your loudest, spread the canvas wide,"

is spirited. The last line I altered, and have re-altered it as it stood. It is closer. These two are your best. But take a good deal of time in finishing the first. How proud should Emma be of her poets!

Perhaps "O Ocean" (though I like it) is too much of the open vowels which Pope objects to. "Great Ocean!" is obvious. To save sad thoughts I think is better (though not good) than for the mind to save herself. But 'tis a noble sonnet. "St. Cloud" I have no fault to find with.

If I return the sonnets, think it no disrespect, for I look for a printed copy. You have done better than ever. And now for a reason I did not notice 'em earlier. On Wednesday they came, and on Wednesday I was a-gadding. Mary gave me a holiday, and I set off to Snow Hill. From Snow Hill I deliberately was marching down, with noble Holborn before me, framing in mental cogitation a map of the dear London in prospect, thinking to traverse Wardour Street, &c., when diabolically, I was interrupted by

Heigh-ho!
Little Barrow!—

Emma knows him, and prevailed on him to spend the day (infinite loss!) at his sister's, a pawnbroker's in Gray's Inn Lane, where was an album, and (O march of intellect!) plenty of literary conversation, and more acquaintance with the state of modern poetry than I could keep up with. I was positively distanced. Knowles's play,[1] which, epilogued by me, lay on the piano, alone made me hold up my head. When I came home I read your letter, and glimpsed at your beautiful sonnet,

"Fair art thou as the morning, my young bride,"

and dwelt upon it in a confused brain, but determined not to open them all next day, being in a state not to be told of at Chatteris. Tell it not in Gath, Emma, lest the daughters triumph! I am at the end of my tether. I wish you would come on Tuesday with your fair bride. Why can't you! Do. We are thankful to your sister for being of the party. Come, and *bring* a sonnet on Mary's birthday. Love to the

[1] *The Wife.*—T.

whole Moxonry, and tell E. I every day love her more, and miss her less. Tell her so, from her loving uncle, as she has let me call myself. I bought a fine embossed card yesterday, and wrote for the Pawnbrokeress's album. She is a Miss Brown, engaged to a Mr. White. One of the lines was (I forget the rest; but she had them at twenty-four hours' notice; she is going out to India with her husband)—

"May your fame,
And fortune, Frances, WHITEN with your name!"

Not bad as a pun. I *will* expect you before two on Tuesday. I am well and happy, tell E.[1]

[1] Other letters to Moxon will be found in the "Miscellaneous Correspondence."

XI.

Correspondence with the Gilmans.

Letter CCLXXX.] Chase Side, Enfield, 26th Oct. 1829.

Dear Gilman,—Allsop brought me your kind message yesterday. How can I account for having not visited Highgate this long time? Change of place seemed to have changed me. How grieved I was to hear in what indifferent health Coleridge has been, and I not to know of it! A little school divinity, well applied, may be healing. I send him honest Tom of Aquin; that was always an obscure great idea to me: I never thought or dreamed to see him in the flesh, but t'other day I rescued him from a stall in Barbican and brought him off in triumph. He comes to greet Coleridge's acceptance, for his shoe-latchets I am unworthy to unloose. Yet there are pretty pro's and con's, and such unsatisfactory learning in him. Commend me to the question of etiquette—"*utrum annunciatio debuerit fieri per angelum*"—*Quæst.* 30, *Articulus* 2. I protest, till now I had thought Gabriel a fellow of some mark and livelihood, not a simple esquire, as I find him. Well, do not break your lay brains, nor I neither, with these curious nothings. They are nuts to our dear friend, whom hoping to see at your first friendly hint that it will be convenient, I end with begging our very kindest loves to Mrs. Gilman. We have had a sorry house of it here. Our

spirits have been reduced till we were at hope's end what to do. Obliged to quit this house, and afraid to engage another, till in extremity, I took the desperate resolve of kicking house and all down, like Bunyan's pack; and here we are in a new life at board and lodging, with an honest couple our neighbours. We have ridded ourselves of the cares of dirty acres; and the change, though of less than a week, has had the most beneficial effects on Mary already. She looks two years and a half younger for it. But we have had sore trials.

God send us one happy meeting!—Yours faithfully, C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXXXI.] Nov. 30, 1829.

Dear G.,—The excursionists reached home, and the good town of Enfield, a little after four, without slip or dislocation. Little has transpired concerning the events of the back-journey, save that on passing the house of 'Squire Mellish, situate a stone bow's cast from the hamlet, Father Westwood, with a good-natured wonderment, exclaimed, "I cannot think what is gone of Mr. Mellish's rooks. I fancy they have taken flight somewhere, but I have missed them two or three years past." All this while, according to his fellow-traveller's report, the rookery was darkening the air above with undiminished population, and deafening all ears but his with their cawings. But Nature has been gently withdrawing such phenomena from the notice of two of Thomas Westwood's senses, from the time he began to miss the rooks. T. Westwood has passed a retired life in this hamlet, of thirty or forty years, living upon the minimum

which is consistent with gentility, yet a star among the minor gentry, receiving the bows of the tradespeople, and courtesies of the alms-women, daily. Children venerate him not less for his external show of gentry, than they wonder at him for a gentle rising endorsation of the person, not amounting to a hump, or if a hump, innocuous as the hump of the buffalo, and coronative of as mild qualities. 'Tis a throne on which patience seems to sit,—the proud perch of a self-respecting humility, stooping with condescension. Thereupon the cares of life have sate, and rid him easily. For he has thrid the *angustiæ domûs* with dexterity. Life opened upon him with comparative brilliancy. He set out as a rider or traveller for a wholesale house, in which capacity he tells of many hair-breadth escapes that befell him; one especially, how he rode a mad horse into the town of Devizes; how horse and rider arrived in a foam, to the utter consternation of the expostulating hostlers, innkeepers, &c. It seems it was sultry weather, piping hot; the steed tormented into frenzy with gad-flies, long past being roadworthy; but safety and the interest of the house he rode for were incompatible things; a fall in serge cloth was expected, and a mad entrance they made of it. Whether the exploit was purely voluntary, or partially; or whether a certain personal defiguration in the man part of this extraordinary centaur (non-assistive to partition of natures) might not enforce the conjunction, I stand not to inquire. I look not with 'skew eyes into the deeds of heroes. The hosier that was burnt with his shop in Field Lane, on Tuesday night, shall have past to heaven for me like a Marian Martyr, provided always, that he consecrated the fortuitous incremation with a

short ejaculation in the exit, as much as if he had taken his state degrees of martyrdom *in formâ* in the market vicinage. There is adoptive as well as acquisitive sacrifice. Be the animus what it might, the fact is indisputable, that this composition was seen flying all abroad, and mine host of Daintry may yet remember its passing through his town, if his scores are not more faithful than his memory. After this exploit (enough for one man), Thomas Westwood seems to have subsided into a less hazardous occupation: and in the twenty-fifth year of his age we find him á haberdasher in Bow Lane: yet still retentive of his early riding (though leaving it to rawer stomachs), and Christmasly at night sithence to this last, and shall to his latest Christmas, hath he, doth he, and shall he, tell after supper the story of the insane steed and the desperate rider. Save for Bedlam or Luke's no eye could have guessed that melting day what house he rid for. But he reposes on his bridles, and after the ups and downs (metaphoric only) of a life behind the counter—hard riding sometimes, I fear, for poor T. W.—with the scrapings together of the shop, and *one anecdote*, he hath finally settled at Enfield; by hard economising, gardening, building for himself, hath reared a mansion; married a daughter; qualified a son for a counting-house; gotten the respect of high and low; served for self or substitute the greater parish offices; hath a special voice at vestries; and, domiciliating us, hath reflected a portion of his house-keeping respectability upon your humble servants. We are greater, being his lodgers, than when we were substantial renters. His name is a passport to take off the sneers of the native Enfielders against obnoxious foreigners. We are

endenizened. Thus much of T. Westwood have I thought fit to acquaint you, that you may see the exemplary reliance upon Providence with which I entrusted so dear a charge as my own sister to the guidance of a man that rode the mad horse into Devizes. To come from his heroic character, all the amiable qualities of domestic life concentre in this tamed Bellerophon. He is excellent over a glass of grog; just as pleasant without it; laughs when he hears a joke, and when (which is much oftener) he hears it not; sings glorious old sea-songs on festival nights; and but upon a slight acquaintance of two years, Coleridge, is as dear a deaf old man to us as old Norris (rest his soul!) was after fifty. To him and his scanty literature (what there is of it, *sound*) have we flown from the metropolis and its damn'd annualists, reviewers, authors, and the whole muddy ink press of that stagnant pool.

Now, Gilman again, you do not know the treasure of the Fullers. I calculate on having massy reading till Christmas. All I want here is books of the true sort, not those things in boards that moderns mistake for books, what they club for at book-clubs.

I did not mean to cheat you with a blank side, but my eye smarts, for which I am taking medicine, and abstain, this day at least, from any aliments but milk-porridge, the innocent taste of which I am anxious to renew after a half-century's disacquaintance. If a blot fall here like a tear, it is not pathos, but an angry eye.

Farewell, while my *specilla* are sound.

Yours and yours, C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXXXII.] 1830.

Pray trust me with the "Church History," as well as the "Worthies." A moon shall restore both. Also give me back "Him of Aquinum." In return you have the *light of my countenance*.[1] Adieu.

P.S.—A sister also of mine comes with it. A son of Nimshi drives her. Their driving will have been furious, impassioned. Pray God they have not toppled over the tunnel! I promise you I fear their steed, bred out of the wind without father, semi-Melchisedecish, hot, phaetontic. From my country lodgings at Enfield. C. L.

LETTER CCLXXXIII.] 1830.

Dear Gilman,—Pray do you, or S. T. C., immediately write to say you have received back the golden works of the dear, fine, silly old angel, which I part from, bleeding, and to say how the Winter has used you all.

It is our intention soon, weather permitting, to come over for a day at Highgate; for beds we will trust to the Gate-House, should you be full: tell me if we may come casually, for in this change of climate there is no naming a day for walking. With best loves to Mrs. Gilman, &c.,

Yours, mopish, but in health,

C. LAMB.

I shall be uneasy till I hear of Fuller's safe arrival.

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[1] A sketch of Lamb, by an amateur artist.—T.

LETTER CCLXXXIV.] March 8th, 1830.

My dear G.,—Your friend Battin (for I knew him immediately by the smooth satinity of his style) must excuse me for advocating the cause of his friends in Spitalfields. The fact is, I am retained by the Norwich people, and have already appeared in their paper under the signatures of "Lucius Sergius," "Bluff," "Broad-Cloth," "No-Trade-to-the-Woollen-Trade," "Anti-plush," &c., in defence of druggets and long camblets. And without this pre-engagement, I feel I should naturally have chosen a side opposite to ——, for in the silken seemingness of his nature there is that which offends me. My flesh tingles at such caterpillars. He shall not crawl me over. Let him and his workmen sing the old burthen,

"Heigh ho, ye weavers!"

for any aid I shall offer them in this emergency. I was over St. Luke's the other day with my friend Tuthill, and mightily pleased with one of his contrivances for the comfort and amelioration of the students. They have double cells, in which a pair may lie feet to feet horizontally, and chat the time away as rationally as they can. It must certainly be more sociable for them these warm raving nights. The right-hand truckle in one of these friendly recesses, at present vacant, was preparing, I understood for Mr. Irving. Poor fellow! it is time he removed from Pentonville. I followed him as far as to Highbury the other day, with a mob at his heels, calling out upon Ermigiddon, who I suppose is some Scotch moderator. He squinted out his favourite eye last Friday, in the fury of possession, upon a poor woman's shoulders that was crying matches, and has not missed

it. The companion truck, as far as I could measure it with my eye, would conveniently fit a person about the length of Coleridge, allowing for a reasonable drawing up of the feet, not at all painful. Does he talk of moving this quarter? You and I have too much sense to trouble ourselves with revelations; marry, to the same in Greek, you may have something professionally to say. Tell C. that he was to come and see us some fine day. Let it be before he moves, for in his new quarters he will necessarily be confined in his conversation to his brother prophet. Conceive the two Rabbis foot to foot, for there are no Gamaliels there to affect an humbler posture! All are masters in that Patmos, where the law is perfect equality; Latmos I should rather say, for they will be Luna's twin darlings; her affection will be ever at the full. Well; keep *your* brains moist with gooseberry this mad March, for the devil of exposition seeketh dry places

C. L.

LETTER CCLXXXV.] August 5, 1834

TO THE REV. JAMES GILMAN.

My dear Sir,—The sad week being over,[1] I must write to you to say that I was glad of being spared from attending; I have no words to express my feeling with you all. I can only say that when you think a short visit from me would be acceptable, when your

[1] Coleridge died on the 25th July, 1834, at Mr. Gilman's house at Highgate, and was buried in Highgate Cemetery. Lamb never recovered from this blow. To the woman who had nursed his "dearest friend" he gave five guineas when he went to Highgate for the first time after Coleridge's funeral.—H.

father and mother shall be able to see me *with comfort*, I will come to the bereaved house. Express to them my tenderest regards and hopes that they will continue our friends still. We both love and respect them as much as a human being can, and finally thank them with our hearts for what they have been to the poor departed.

God bless you all,

C. LAMB.

Mr. Walden's,
Church Street, Edmonton.[1]

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[1] See "Miscellaneous Correspondence."

XII.

Correspondence with Mr. Walter Wilson.

[1801—1829].

Letter CCLXXXVI.] August 14th, 1801.

Dear Wilson,—I am extremely sorry that any serious differences should subsist between us, on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before, that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity, in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company, or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a cer-

tainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity or feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

Believe me, very affectionately yours,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXXXVII.] E. I. H. 16th Dec. 1822.

Dear Wilson,—*Lightning* I was going to call you. You must have thought me negligent in not answering your letter sooner. But I have a habit of never writing letters but at the office; 'tis so much time cribbed out of the Company; and I am just got out of the thick of a tea-sale, in which most of the entry of notes, deposits, &c., usually falls to my share.

I have nothing of De Foe's[1] but two or three novels and the "Plague History." I can give you no information about him. As a slight general character of what I remember of them, (for I have not looked into them latterly,) I would say that in the appearance of *truth*, in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them, they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *author* never appears in these self-narratives, (for so they

[1] These remarks upon Defoe are substantially repeated in Lamb's Essay "On the Secondary Novels of Defoe," prefixed to Mr. Wilson's Life, 1828.—H.

ought to be called, or rather autobiographies,) but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in every thing he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phases, till you cannot choose but believe them. It is like reading evidence given in a court of justice. So anxious the story-teller seems that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter of fact or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it, with his favourite figure of speech, "I say," so and so, though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories, and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed it is to such principally that he writes. His style is everywhere beautiful, but plain and *homely* Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers; hence it is an especial favourite with seafaring men, poor boys, servant-maids, &c. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy, from their deep interest, to find a shelf in the libraries of the wealthiest and the most learned. His passion for *matter-of-fact narrative* sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents, which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half or two-thirds of "Colonel Jack" is of this description. The beginning of

"Colonel Jack" is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature; and putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed Crusoe. "Roxana" (first edition) is the next in interest, though he left out the best part of it in subsequent editions from a foolish hypercriticism of his friend Southerne. But "Moll Flanders," the "Account of the Plague," &c., are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character. Believe me, with friendly recollections, *Brother*, (as I used to call you,) Yours,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII. Feb. 24, 1823.

Dear W.,—I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have any thing to say. In answer to your questions, it was at your house I saw an edition of "Roxana," the preface to which stated that the author had left out that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way, (as Savage is said to have done in his, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which

shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falkner from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition, (if you have not parted with it,) for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* "Roxana." The prologue you speak of was mine, and so named, but not worth much. You ask me for two or three pages of verse. I have not written so much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. May be I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer 'Colonel Jack" to either "Robinson Crusoe" or 'Roxana." I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention. I do not know that Swift mentions him; Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond "Crusoe." I do not know who wrote "Quarl." I never thought of "Quarl" as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells. Do you know the paper in the *Englishman* by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of "Crusoe.' You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own Memoirs; they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, and a good book. 'Puzzelli" puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about 'Donald M'Leod." I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistances I can give in the way of information. I wish your book

out, for I shall like to see any thing about De Foe or from you.[1] Your old friend,

C. LAMB.

From my and your old compound.

LETTER CCLXXXIX.][1] May 28, 1829.

Dear W.,—Introduce this, or omit it, as you like. I think I wrote better about it in a letter to you from India H. If you have that, perhaps out of the two I could patch up a better thing, if you'd return both. But I am very poorly, and have been harassed with an illness of my sister's.

The Ode was printed in the *New Times*[2] nearly the end of 1825, and I have only omitted some silly lines, call it a corrected copy.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

Put my name to either, or both, as you like.

Walter Wilson, Esq.,
Burnett House,
Near Bath, Somersetshire.

LETTER CCXC.] Enfield, 15th November, 1829.

My dear Wilson,—I have not opened a packet of unknown contents for many years that gave me so much pleasure as when I disclosed your three volumes. I have given them a careful perusal, and

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[1] Those who wish to read an admirable character of De Foe, associated with the most valuable information respecting his personal history, should revert to an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on De Foe, attributed to the author of the "Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and of the delightful "Biography of Oliver Goldsmith," almost as charming as its subject.—T.

they have taken their degree of classical books upon my shelves. De Foe was always my darling; but what darkness was I in as to far the larger part of his writings! I have now an epitome of them all. I think the way in which you have done the "Life" the most judicious you could have pitched upon. You have made him tell his own story, and your comments are in keeping with the tale. Why, I never heard of such a work as the *Review*. Strange that in my stall-hunting days I never so much as lit upon an odd volume of it. This circumstance looks as if they were never of any great circulation. But I may have met with 'em, and not knowing the prize, overpast 'em. I was almost a stranger to the whole history of Dissenters in those reigns, and picked my way through that strange book the "Consolidator" at random. How affecting are some of his personal appeals! What a machine of projects he set on foot! and following writers have picked his pocket of the patents. I do not understand whereabouts in "Roxana" he himself left off. I always thought the complete-tourist-sort of description of the town she passes through on her last embarkation miserably unseasonable and out of place. I knew not they were spurious. Enlighten me as to where the apocryphal matter commences. I, by accident, can correct one A. D., "Family Instructor," vol. ii. 1718; you say his first volume had then reached the fourth edition; now I have a fifth, printed for Eman Matthews, 1717. So have I plucked one rotten date, or rather picked it up where it had inadvertently fallen, from your flourishing date tree, the Palm of Engaddi. I may take it for my pains. I think yours a book which every public

library must have, and every English scholar should have. I am sure it has enriched my meagre stock of the author's works. I seem to be twice as opulent. Mary is by my side, just finishing the second volume. It must have interest to divert her away so long from her modern novels. Colburn will be quite jealous. I was a little disappointed at my "Ode to the Treadmill" not finding a place, but it came out of time. The two papers of mine will puzzle the reader, being so akin. Odd, that never keeping a scrap of my own letters, with some fifteen years' interval I should nearly have said the same things. But I shall always feel happy in having my name go down anyhow with De Foe's, and that of his historiographer. I promise myself, if not immortality, yet diuternity of being read in consequence. We have both had much illness this year; and feeling infirmities and fretfulness grow upon us, we have cast off the cares of housekeeping, sold off our goods, and commenced boarding and lodging with a very comfortable old couple next door to where you found us. We use a sort of common table. Nevertheless, we have reserved a private one for an old friend; and when Mrs. Wilson and you revisit Babylon, we shall pray you to make it yours for a season. Our very kindest remembrances to you both.

From your old friend and *fellow-journalist*, now in *two instances*,

C. LAMB.

Hazlitt is going to make your book a basis for a review of De Foe's Novels in "the Edinbro'." I wish I had health and spirits to do it. Hone I have not seen, but I doubt not he will be much pleased

with your performance. I very much hope you will give us an account of Dunton, &c. But what I should more like to see would be a Life and Times of Bunyan. Wishing health to you, and long life to your healthy book, again I subscribe me,

Yours in verity, C. L.

XIII.

Correspondence with Miss Hutchinson.

Letter CCXCI.] Thursday, 19th Oct., 1815

Dear Miss H.,—I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill, and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favourable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time, we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise. By God's blessing, in a few weeks we

may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them, at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable; we are strong for the time as rocks;—"the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs." Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla! I feel I hardly feel enough for him; my own calamities press about me, and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can—all the kindness I can, towards you all—God bless you! I hear nothing from Coleridge.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXCII.] [1823.]

Dear Miss H.,—Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters.[1] There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught, (for she never ventures an epistle without a foul copy first,) which is obliged to be interlined; which spoils the neatest epistle, you know. Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date, (25th

[1] Miss Lamb wrote a particularly good hand.—T.

April 1823,) are not figures, but figurantes; and the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless, as drunkards in the day-time. It is no better when she rules her paper. Her lines "are not less erring' than her words. A sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet; which, you know, is quite contrary to Euclid. Her very blots are not bold like this, [*here a large blot is inserted,*] but poor smears, half left in and half scratched out, with another smear left in their place. I like a clear letter; a bold free hand, and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go through them (a second operation) to dot her *i*'s, and cross her *t*'s. I don't think she can make a corkscrew if she tried, which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up.

There is a corkscrew!—one of the best I ever drew. By the way, what incomparable whisky that was of Monkhouse's! But if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing, like a fencer at a fair.

April 25th, 1823.

Dear Miss H.,—It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down so smoothly, and that Mrs. Monkhouse's spirits are so good and enterprising. It shows whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its outstripping neighbour. Pray present our kindest wishes to her and all; (that sentence should properly have come into the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in.) "Time" (as was said of one of us) "toils after us in vain." I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I

shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne; and besides, I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us; I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them; only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two that "shuts amain"—and that is the reason I am locked up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all; and pray remember me euphoniously to Mr. Gruvellegan. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower. Is it built of flints?—and does it stand at Kingsgate?

LETTER CCXCIII.]

The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

January 20th, 1825.

Dear Miss H.,—Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive incrustation that we used to pick-axe open, about this season, in old Gloucester Place. When shall we eat another goose pie together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten; twice as big, and half as good as a Partridge. You ask about the editor of the *London;* I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge t'other shilling.

De Quincy's 'Parody' was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum.*[1]. The "Horns" is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the *Spectator.* I had signed it "Jack Horner;" but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the "Memoir of Liston?"—and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, Pure Invention, and has passed for gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next Number I figure as a theologian! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack-Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not; I am almost at the end of my tether. Coleridge is quite blooming, but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the Spring. Winter, *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately picked up an epigram which pleased me—

> "Two noble earls, whom if I quote,
> Some folks might call me sinner,
> The one invented half a coat,
> The other half a dinner.

[1] Mr. de Quincy had commenced a series of Letters in the *London Magazine*, "To a Young Man whose Education has been neglected," as a vehicle for conveying miscellaneous information in his admirable style. Upon this hint Lamb, with the assent which Mr. de Quincy could well afford to give, contributed a parody on the scheme, in "A Letter to an Old Gentleman whose Education has been neglected."—T

"The plan was good, as some will say;
And fitted to console one;
Because, in this poor starving day,
Few can afford a whole one."

I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory; but spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, &c.

ELIA.

LETTER CCXCIV.] April 18, 1825.

Dear Miss Hutchinson,—You want to know all about my gaol delivery. Take it then. About twelve weeks since I had a sort of intimation that a resignation might be well accepted from me. This was a kind bird's whisper. On that hint I spake. Gilman and Tuthill furnished me with certificates of wasted health and sore spirits—not much more than the truth, I promise you—and for nine weeks I was kept in a fright. I had gone too far to recede, and they might take advantage, and dismiss me with a much less sum than I had reckoned on. However, liberty came at last, with a liberal provision. I have given up what I could have lived on in the country; but have enough to live here, by management and scribbling occasionally. I would not go back to my prison for seven years longer for £10,000 a year; seven years after one is fifty, is no trifle to give up. Still I am a young *pensioner*, and have served but thirty-three years; very few, I assure you, retire before forty, forty-five, or fifty years' service.

You will ask how I bear my freedom? Faith, for some days I was staggered; could not comprehend the magnitude of my deliverance; was confused, giddy; knew not whether I was on my head or my heel, as they say. But those giddy feelings have gone away, and my weather-glass stands at a degree or two above

CONTENT.

I go about quiet, and have none of that restless hunting after recreation which made holydays formerly uneasy joys. All being holydays, I feel as if I had none, as they do in heaven, where 'tis all red-letter days. I have a kind letter from the Wordsworths, *congratulatory* not a little. It is a damp, I do assure you, amid all my prospects, that I can receive *none* from a quarter upon which I had calculated, almost more than from any, upon receiving congratulations. I had grown to like poor Monkhouse more and more. I do not esteem a soul living or not living more warmly than I had grown to esteem and value him. But words are vain. We have none of us to count upon many years. That is the only cure for sad thoughts. If only some died, and the rest were permanent on earth, what a thing a friend's death would be then!

I must take leave, having put off answering a load of letters to this morning; and this, alas! is the first. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. Monkhouse,

And believe us yours most truly,

C. LAMB.

LETTER CCXCV.] Desk, 11 Nov., 1825.

My Dear Miss Hutchinson,—Mary bids me thank you for your kind letter. We are a little puzzled about your whereabouts. Miss Wordsworth writes Torkay, and you have queerly made it Torquay. Now Tokay we have heard of, and Torbay, which we take to be the true *male* spelling of the place; but somewhere we fancy it to be on "Devon's leafy shores," where we heartily wish the kindly breezes may restore all that is invalid among you. Robinson is returned, and speaks much of you all. We shall be most glad to hear good news from you from time to time. The best is, Procter is at last married. We have made sundry attempts to see the bride, but have accidently failed, she being gone out a gadding. We had promised our dear friends the Monkhouses—promised ourselves rather—a visit to them at Ramsgate; but I thought it best, and Mary seemed to have it at heart too, not to go far from home these last holydays. It is connected with a sense of unsettlement; and secretly I know she hoped that such abstinence would be friendly to her health. She certainly has escaped her sad yearly visitation, whether in consequence of it, or of faith in it, and we have to be thankful for a good 1824. To get such a notion into our heads may go a great way another year. Not that we quite confined ourselves; but assuming Islington to be head quarters, we made timid flights to Ware, Watford, &c., to try how the trouts tasted, for a night out or so, not long enough to make the sense of change oppressive, but sufficient to scour the rust of home. Coleridge is not returned from the sea. As a little scandal may divert you recluses, we were in the Summer dining at a clergyman of Southey's "Church

of England," at Hertford, the same who officiated to Thurtell's last moments, and indeed an old contemporary Blue of C.'s and mine at school. After dinner we talked of C.; and F., who is a mighty good fellow in the main, but hath his cassock prejudices, inveighed against the moral character of C. I endeavoured to enlighten him on the subject, till having driven him out of some of his holds, he stopped my mouth at once by appealing to me whether it was not very well known that C. "at that very moment was living in a state of open adultery with Mrs. I * * * * * * at Highgate?" Nothing I could say, serious or bantering, after that, could remove the deep inrooted conviction of the whole company assembled that such was the case! Of course you will keep this quite close, for I would not involve my poor blundering friend, who I dare say believed it all thoroughly. My interference of course was imputed to the goodness of my heart, that could imagine nothing wrong, &c. Such it is if ladies will go gadding about with other people's husbands at watering places. How careful we should be to avoid the appearance of evil!

I thought this anecdote might amuse you. It is not worth resenting seriously; only I give it as a specimen of orthodox candour. O Southey, Southey, how long would it be before you would find one of us Unitarians propagating such unwarrantable scandal! Providence keep you all from the foul fiend, scandal, and send you back well and happy to dear Gloster Place! C. L.

Miss Hutchinson,
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Strand, Torkay, Torbay, Devon.

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